

WILDS

AND

Occasional Tales

Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves

The fairy family

Archibald Maclaren

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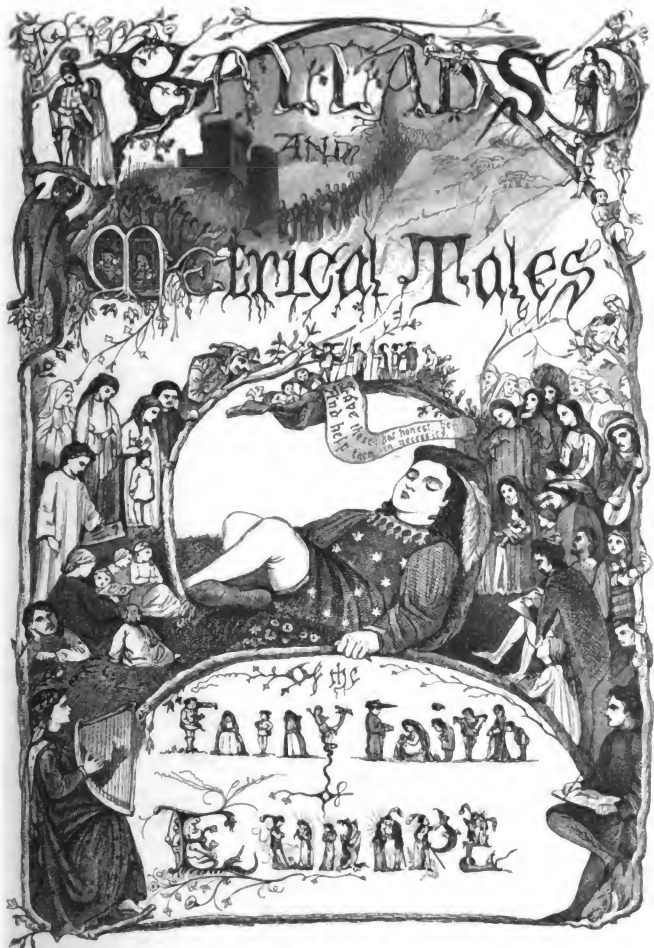
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LONDON LONGMAN & CO 1857

THE
FAIRY FAMILY:

A SERIES OF
BALLADS & METRICAL TALES

ILLUSTRATING THE
FAIRY MYTHOLOGY OF EUROPE.

*“ Love them that honest be,
And help them in necessitie.”*

LONDON :
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, & ROBERTS.

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“I would not for any quantity of gold part with the wonderful tales which I have retained from my earliest childhood, or have met with in my progress through life.”

LUTHER.

LONDON:
Printed by SPOTTISWOODE & Co.
New-street Square.

P R E F A C E .



THE Author has been led to the composition of this Work chiefly by the fact, that while Fairy Lore possesses a charm and attraction above all others for young people, and while its value and importance as a means of moral instruction are fully recognised, much of our Fairy Literature, so eagerly longed for and so greedily devoured, is but moral poison,—weakened by unmeaning extravagances, polluted by indelicate allusions, and disfigured by purposeless cruelties and crimes.

The Fairy Mythology has always appeared to him to present peculiar advantages as a medium for virtuous teaching, consisting as it does of fictions unequalled in beauty and interest when viewed as individual conceptions, perfect and complete as an elaborated series, and strangely wonderful as forming a system of semi-belief once common to all countries and all races of men.

With this view, he has aimed at a series of Tales of a pure moral character, in that form of composition which he considers the most effective,—Ballads of varied structure and rhythm. He has devoted one to each of the principal personages of the Fairy Family, choosing a subject in other respects of strong human interest, and characteristic of the people among whom the scene is laid; and he has made it an object of special care, that the moral shall be worked out in the development of the tale—not tacked to the end of it, to stand in pointed but unamiable antithesis to all that has gone before. But, while ever keeping this higher object in view, he has earnestly endeavoured to preserve the true mythologic character of the various personages, their powers, attributes and dispositions, habits, personal appearance and costumes; so that the Work should fulfil the promise on the title-page—illustrate the Fairy Mythology of Europe.

Much of the material thus employed is drawn from a store collected by the Author in early life from oral tradition, the rest from the works of Keightley, Grimm, Mallet, Thorpe, Scott, Leyden, Southey, Chambers, and other well-known writers on Fairy Lore. He has not cumbered his pages with references to his authorities,

because no one who has not given the subject particular attention would believe how numerous they are; and also because he deemed it best that the Notes, forming as they do an integral portion of the Work, should retain in all respects the same tone of unquestioning credence assumed in the Ballads: but he has been careful to distinguish by a different type all quotations of importance; and when the story forming the framework of a ballad is not entirely original, the fact is mentioned in its note.

Some of these Tales may be considered as too trifling for adult readers, and others as too advanced in language and treatment for children; but from the Nursery to the Study is a wide step,—a numerous and very important portion of our Thirty Millions stands between, and it is for this portion more especially that they were written;—although the Author will have somewhat mistaken his purpose and failed in his efforts, if they be not read with profit by the intelligent child, and with interest by the indulgent reader of maturer years.

OXFORD,
April, 1857.

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Introduction.

“ In old time of the King Artour—* * * *
All was this land fulfilled of faërie.”

IN the old time every Wood and Grove, Field and Meadow, Hill and Cave, Sea and River, was tenanted by tribes and communities of the great Fairy Family, and at least one of its members was a resident in every House and Homestead where the kindly virtues of charity and hospitality were practised and cherished. This was the faith of our forefathers—a graceful trustful faith, peopling the whole earth with beings whose mission was to watch over and protect all helpless and innocent things, to encourage the good, to comfort the forlorn, to punish the wicked, and to thwart and subdue the overbearing; a faith that had its believers in every land, around the turf fire in the peasant's hut, and on the lifted dais of the noble's hall—though their belief was ever the strongest whose dwellings were in the loneliest places, and the simpler their lives the more

frequent were the helpful visits of their super-mortal neighbours. Says an ancient Chronicler—

“The Fairy-folk do dislike the towns on account of the wickedness thereof.”

And another—

“They call them the Good People, and say they live in wilds and forests and mountains, and shun great cities on account of the wickedness acted therein : all the houses are blessed where they visit, for they fly vice.”

And a modern Reviewer—

“It is true where the stream of tradition runs pure, we still find them spoken of as the beneficent friends and protectors of mankind.”

At what time they first came to dwell among men is not known, for no legend or tradition, story or ballad, hints at a period so remote. Whence they came we know full well, though, strange as it may seem, numerous are the doubts and perplexities in the minds of men to which this question has given rise; nay, it has even led many to disbelieve in the very existence of the fairies. And thus do they account for what they call the credulity of our forefathers.

“In the rude old times of migrations and conquests, when the aboriginal inhabitants of a country had been vanquished, they fled to the mountain

fastnesses and forest solitudes. Thus fled the ancient Picts into the remote Highlands before their more powerful neighbours, the Lowland Scots; thus fled the diminutive natives of Lappish, Lettish, and Finnish countries before the victorious Afæ. In the course of time they ventured from their hiding-places to visit their former habitations, now occupied by their conquerors, either to barter objects of the chase and their solitary manufacture for food and raiment, or for the darker purposes of revenge—exciting commiseration, cupidity, or fear: ultimately they came to be regarded as supernatural beings, the Brownies, Dwarfs and Trolls of their respective countries.”

Says another—

“ Nay, they were not living beings at all, mortal or super-mortal; they were but the impersonations of certain virtues loved by the people among whom they were said to dwell, or the embodied ideas of certain elemental phenomena. Thus is Brownie but the impersonation of the national virtues of fidelity and hospitality, so highly prized by Lowland Laird and Border Chief in the feudal times of Scotland; the Pixies, that of the cherished cleanliness and industry of the English housewife; and the Fata Morgana is but a name for the storms, at once terrible and beautiful, that so often overtake the ma-

riner in the narrow and dangerous seas that separate Naples and Sicily."

Others there are who view the whole Fairy Faith as a series of fanciful inventions ; nay, will not even admit that the inventions are our own. Says one of these —

“ Our Fairy Tales are all borrowed from the East. The ancient tales of Persia soon spread along the shores of the Mediterranean. The Moors of Spain, who kept up a constant intercourse with all the Moslems who spoke the tongue of Arabia, must have had their share in the possession of these treasures of the imagination. The Franks, who occupied Syria with their colonies during two centuries, must have learned many a tale from their Moslem subjects and neighbours ; and the Venetians, who possessed exclusively the trade of Syria and Egypt down to the sixteenth century, may have imported tales as well as spices in their argosies ; and every one will allow that nothing was so likely as that the Troubadours and Trouvères who accompanied the several crusades from Europe to Palestine, should on their return bring with them the romantic and highly poetical fictions of the East. The generic term *Fairy* is confirmation of the accuracy of this hypothesis, being but the Arabo-Persian word *Peri*.”

Says another—

“ Nay, ye need not go so far as the East for the personages of the Fairy Faith. They are but a reproduction in a popular form of the Deities of Greece and Rome. Thus the *Mermaids* of the Northern Isles are but the *Nereids* of Antiquity; and the Household spirits, whether known as *Brownie* in Scotland, *Kobold* in Germany, or *Pixy* in England, are but the *Lares* of Latium—the guardians of the domestic hearth, and the avertors of evil. Moreover, the description of the Fairy Queen by Thomas the Rhymer, the author of the earliest poem in our language, might pass for a portrait of the Goddess Diana—

‘ Her steed was of the highest beauty and spirit, and at his mane hung thirty silver bells and nine, which made music to the wind as she paced along. Her saddle was of ivory, laid over with goldsmith’s work: her stirrups, her dress, all corresponded with her extreme beauty and the magnificence of her array. The fair huntress had her bow in hand, and her arrows at her belt. She led three greyhounds in a leash, and three hounds of scent followed her closely.’

As to the origin of the term *Fairy*, we have it in the Latin *fatum*.

Says a third—

“ Nay, we are indebted to the North for our Fairy lore. It is an integral part of the old Norse

creed. The earliest of the Icelandic sagas, and the Elder Edda itself, compiled in the eleventh century, prove the belief in *Duergar* or *Dwarfs* and *Alfar* or *Elves*. And if the generic term *Fairy* be not derived from *Alfar*, some specific ones, such as *Drows* and *Trows*, used in Orkney and Zealand, are but variations of the Norse *Duergar* and *Trolls*, and point to the times when the old sea-rovers of the Baltic paid their dreaded visits to these islands."

Says a fourth—

"Nay, the West of Europe is the author of its own Fairy lore. The Fairies of Celtic and Teutonic nations are as different from the ethereal Peries of Persia, 'who hover in the balmy clouds, dwell in the colours of the rainbow,' and exist on the odours of flowers, as the gnomes who swelter in the mines of Scandinavia are from the classic Deities of Greece and Rome. In the *Nibelungen Lied*, written about the time of Attila, we read how the Elf-King is vanquished by Theodorick of Bern; and as far as proof of originality lies in a name, take for choice the old German *Feen* or *Feinen*, the Italian *Fata*, the French *Fée*, or the Spanish *Hada*.

Says a fifth—

"Nay, ye are all wrong. True it is that the

Fairy Faith of Europe has been received from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, but from none of these in particular. It is an agglomeration of the superstitions of all nations, fables from the Roman, Celtic, Gothic and Oriental mythologies."

Says a sixth—

"Yea, they are all wrong, and thou art the farthest wrong of any; the converse of this is the right. The attributes have been dispersed, not collected. Fables have radiated from a common centre, and their universal consent does not prove their subsequent reaction upon each other, but their common derivation from a common origin."

Behold how they wander!—lost on the waste of conjecture and doubt. Whence they came we know full well from the lips of one who had sojourned there [Thomas of Ercildoune, the prophet-bard of Scotland] and who was gifted by the Fairy Queen herself with

"The tongue which could not lie."

They came from their own green land, the ever-bright Realm of Faërie.

FAIRIES
OF THE
WOODS AND GROVES.

The Elf-Folk.

—♦—
“ They stole little Bridget
For seven years long.”
—♦—

The Elf-folk lived in societies of considerable numbers, in the British Islands, Northern Germany, and Scandinavia. By day they dwelt in the shady groves; and at night they came forth to visit the dwellings of men, in order to perform the duties appointed them by their King and Queen. The most important of these duties was that of protecting ill-used or orphan children, or benefiting those who, on the death of a child's parents, had undertaken to protect or support it. When no adequate protection for the child was afforded by its kindred or neighbours, it was not uncommon for the Elf-folk to remove it, either to their own secret haunts in the groves, or to convey it direct to Fairy Land for a season, which might consist of seven, twice seven, or thrice seven years—the time being determined by the nature of the home from which the child had been taken, and to which it must

eventually be brought back. This gave rise to unworthy suspicions and vulgar accusations of child-stealing, which were the more difficult to disprove, because, although untrue in one sense, they were true in another : true that they did bear away ill-used and orphan children, untrue that they did so from any selfish or spiteful motive. Again, it was said that these thefts were usually committed on St. John's or Midsummer Eve ; and it was believed that a child born on that night, or after the death of its father, was placed by nature under the special guardianship of this branch of the Fairy Family ; but this would apply properly only to children who could not receive adequate protection from their own kind ; and although St. John's Eve was undoubtedly chosen for important communications between the distant Elfin-groves and the settlements of men, it was probably only on account of its mildness, brightness, and unequalled beauty. Yet was it not uncommon for ill-informed and timid persons to take precautions for excluding Elfin visitors from their dwellings, by hanging over their doors boughs of the St. John's Wort, gathered at midnight on St. John's Eve.

THE ELF-FOLK.



PART I.

LITTLE MABEL smiling lies,
While the neighbours weep ;
Smiling with her large blue eyes—
Does her mother sleep ?
Lingers yet a sunset streak
Of colour upon either cheek,
But the close-shut lips have none,
They are white and cold as stone—
Does her mother sleep ?

She will waken never more,
She is dead, she is dead ;
After his who went before,
Her spirit sad hath fled :
For Mabel's father too is gone,
She is in the world alone ;

Of her kindred there is none ;
There was but one, only one,
And she lies now as cold as stone
 There upon the bed.

Orphan Mabel, who will now
 Deck with flowers your head,
And part the tresses on your brow,
 Now your mother's dead ?
Who will lay their loving cheek
On your shoulder round and fleck,
And to your neck, through curl and tress,
Uncounted scores of kisses press,
And every tress and ringlet bless
In murmurings of happiness,
Scarce audible 'tween kisses and kisses,
 Now your mother's dead ?

Take her from the darkened room —
 Do not weep, do not weep —
She is frightened at the gloom —
 Mother is asleep —
Lay her in her bassinette
Near the little window set,
Where the scented mignonette
 And nasturtiums creep.

Baby Mabel, close your eyes,
 Do not weep, do not weep,
For the sun has left the skies —
 Sing her so to sleep —
And the small birds every one
Wearily to roost are gone,

And the daifies on the green,
That so bright by day were seen,
Round their golden eyes have drawn
Their silver lids to sleep till dawn—
Mabel is asleep.

PART II.

Whisper, whisper through the grove —
'T is the evening breeze
Telling all its tale of love
To the aspen trees,
And its earnest wooing brings
Tremblings strange and flutterings
To the listening trees.

Twinkle, twinkle o'er the grass —
Is it shade? is it light?
Or do both together pass
Across the green to-night?
Twinkle, twinkle dark and sheen,
Mantle fold and feet between,
Glancing feet and mantles green,
Greener than the grass, I ween —
Mingling shade and light.

Trooping, trooping on they go,
 O'er the dewy grafs —
 Little feet as white as fnow
 Twinkling as they pafs,
 O'er the grafs their mantles fweep,
 And the daifies, roused from fleep,
 Half unclofe their dewy eyes,
 Timidly and with furprife —
 Nothing but the ftarry fkies,
 And the dewy grafs.

Liften, liften! All is ftill —
 Mabel is afleep.
 Up upon the window fill
 Where nafurtiums creep ;
 All into the room have gone —
 Sound of turning hinge was none —
 Pafte the box of mignonette,
 In the latticed window fet,
 To the curtained baffinette —
 Mabel is afleep.

Softly, foftly! Firft they breathe
 On her clofèd eyes —
 Her cheek the jetty fringe beneath
 White as ivory lies!
 Then acrofs her rofy lips
 They deftly draw their finger tips,
 And the colour flies!

Then her taper hands they place
 Together, palm and palm,

As we see in Holy Place
Angel pure and calm
Carven on an infant's tomb,
So within the silent room,
Half in light and half in gloom,
Lies she pure and calm.

Then her snowy smock is wound,
Oh, so tenderly,
Both her tiny feet around —
Could her mother see!
They wrap her in their mantles green,
Covering at once and screen;
Screen from glancing beams of light,
Covering from dews of night,
Close, carefully.

Bufile, bufile! Every one
Out into the light —
'T is the eve of good St. John,
And the moon is bright —
Quickly, quickly o'er the grafs
Of the dewy meadows pass,
Hasten, hasten to the shade
By the quivering aspens made,
While they whisper overhead
With the breeze of night.

In between the aspens grey
Glide the Elfin band;
They have carried far away
To their own green land

Little Mabel, good and fair,
Never to know pain or care,
Only happiness is there—
In the Elfin Land.

The Korrigan.

“ Of Fairy damsels met in forests wide
By knights.”

The Korrigan of Brittany were the same as the Elle-maids of Scandinavia. There is reason, moreover, to believe that they were the same personages as the Fée Ladies of Middle-Age Romance, and the Damoiselles in the Lais of Marie de France.

A Korrigan was careful only to be seen by night, for she had then the power of assuming every trait of beauty and grace of which the female form is susceptible, and also of changing the appearance of every surrounding thing; of making the meanest and most common objects in nature appear as works of art of the greatest rarity and value. Thus, when by her magic power she had created bower, château, or palace—had furnished it with everything that could give delight to eye, ear, or palate—and sat surrounded by her nine attendant nymphs, inferior to herself alone in beauty of person and

grace of manner—ice-cold must have been the heart, or high and noble its purposes and resolves, that could resist her blandishments and charms. The constancy of lover to his affianced bride, or of soldier to his knightly devoir, could never be subjected to greater trial and temptation. But by night alone had she this power; on the first ray of morning light reaching the scene of her enchantments, the charm was dissolved; every object resumed its real and wonted shape and appearance, and the beautiful Korrigan herself became as un-fightly as she had erewhile been fair.

The Forest of Brézeliande was the scene of most of the Breton wonders; and it was there that Merlin, the mighty enchanter, was buried.

THE KORRIGAN.



It is a Knight of Brittany
Boune for the Holy Land,
Without or page or squire rides he
Through gloomy Brézeliande ;
A league behind, in long array,
With broidered scarf and pennon gay,
With glancing blade and mace and lance
And helm and morion,
To join the chivalry of France
His gallant band comes on.

The wood is filent, dense and dark,
And closing is the day,
And scarcely can Sir Roland mark
The narrow forest way :
Impatient, in advance he rides
And fretful of delay, he chides —

“ I shall the very latest be
 Of all the Knights in Brittany !”
 With armed heel and hand
 His jaded charger urges he
 Through haunted Brézeliande.

As sinks the sun, the summer moon,
 With face serene and bright,
 Looks through the arching branches down
 Upon the latest knight —
 “ Fair Moon, the light of lady’s eyes,
 That guided oft these steps of mine,
 And once I did so highly prize,
 Is not so safe or sweet as thine :
 A lamp to guide me thou dost prove
 Upon my darksome way ;
 Gramercy for that light of love,
 It shines to lead astray !

“ I have resigned — ’t is in my vow —
 All love and dalliance,
 My foot is in the stirrup now,
 My right hand grasps the lance ;
 My foot with rowel redly dyed
 Against my charging courser’s side,
 May mingle only in the dance
 Where mailed knights a-tilt advance ;
 My hand the maffy battle-blade
 And lengthy spear must wield ;
 To minstrel youth and love-sick maid
 The lute it now must yield.

“ ‘Fore lady fair — ’t is in my vow —
I wear my battle-gear,
’T is in my vow that casque on brow
Alone, may I to lady bow
And fit in her chambère :
I may not touch a lady’s hand
Save with the glove that grasps my brand ;
I may not kiss her lip or cheek,
Or word of passion to her speak,
Or cast her glance, or waft her sigh,
Or feat me by her side ;
A Soldier of the Cross am I,
The battle-blade my bride.

“ And I must fast — ’t is in my vow —
From dark till dawn of morn ;
Small risk there is to-night, I trow,
That I shall be manforn ! ”
For scarcely now the scattered beams
The setting moon down slanting streams
Athwart the forest, reach the ground —
“ Fair Moon, so ends thy light ;
Unbroken shadow blackens round,
Here rest we for the night.”

But ere the knight has bent a knee,
Or lip has moved in prayer,
While yet to clasp his rosarie
His hand is raised in air,
Glams suddenly upon his sight,
Amid the forest gloom, a light ;

No meteor flame, it tarries there,
A lamp, a shining casement square,
Not one, but many, row on row —
“Methought I did each château know
In mine own Brittany;
Rest here, my charger, while I go
To see what this may be.”

The porte is wide and archèd high —
Nor guard nor groom is there —
The court-yard open to the sky,
And fronting to the porte doth lie
A hall of entrance fair;
Sir Roland strides into the hall,
Loud echoing his footsteps fall,
No lacquey answers to his call;
But, sighing like the summer breeze,
When rippling o'er the leafy trees
At pensive eventide,
Sweet music through a half-shut door
Seems wooingly to glide:
Sir Roland touched the cross he wore —
“Such welcome had I ne'er before.”
Along the hollow sounding floor
He steps with measured stride.

The door glides open silently
Ere yet its panel touched can be
By his extended hands;
Then, still as knight in effigy
In niche of hall or armoury,
He in the doorway stands.

Upon a velvet couch reclines
A lady tall and fair,
A narrow rim of gold confines
Her long and floating hair ;
Till like a tide that outlet found
Beneath what had its current bound,
It breaks beneath the golden round
And streams o'er shoulder, couch, and ground,
A torrent wide and free.
Sir Roland had at tourney been,
At camp and court, pardie,
And eke at fête on village green,
And had each grade of beauty seen
From rustic maid to France's Queen ;
But beauty did he never see
Like that he looks on now —
Sir Roland, clasp thy rosarie
And think upon thy vow.

And grouped this beauteous Lady near
Are maidens thrice told three,
Each with the same long floating hair,
Save that no band of gold is there,
And each a snow-white robe doth wear
Like that of her Ladye.

She quits her couch, and filently
Glides past her maidens, three and three,
All in their robes of white,
As 'mong a group of stars we see
The moon on summer night :

Upon Sir Roland's wrist she lays
 Her hand so small and light :
 Sir Roland bends his quiet gaze —
 " A welcome kind, Sir Knight."
 " Fair Lady, thanks." She would remove
 The gauntlet from his hand.
 " 'T is in my vow to wear the glove
 In bower that grasps my brand."

No word she to the knight replies,
 But answers with her beaming eyes
 In acquiescent smile ;
 And with a fascinating grace
 Of diffidence and stateliness,
 Doth slowly up the chamber pace
 Beside her guest the while.

" Sir Knight, remove your battle gear,
 Unless my maidens you do fear —
 Your casque is on your brow."
 " 'T is in my vow that I do wear
 My casque on brow 'fore lady fair —
 'T is in my knightly vow."

Up to the velvet couch they go,
 The Lady on it sinking low —
 " Sir Knight, look I so stern a foe —
 Sir Knight, with casque on brow ?
 Come seat thee on the couch with me —"
Sir Roland, clasp thy rosarie
And think upon thy vow.

Sir Roland still upon his wrist
Her little hand can feel ;
Sooth, it were harder to refist
That touch, than grasp of foe in list
In mail of Milan steel !
Sir Roland stands unmoved and calm
And gently shifts aside her palm —
“ Behold, fair Lady, by my fide
I ever bear with me my bride,
Thus belted to me close,
And I, my glory 'tis and pride,
A foldier of the ——.”

But ere he can his phrafe complete
The Lady springs upon her feet —
“ Hafte, Maidens, the repaft !
I wis thou mayft complain that we
Do lack in hofpitality,
And jeft while thou doft faft.”

“ I may not fit by night at board ——”
Sir Roland stands alone !
The maidens vanished at the word,
The Lady too is gone ;
They paffed behind a woven fcreen,
Of tapeftry, where ivy green
And tufts of lichen grey are feen,
And roots of faxifrage between
The piles of carven ftone.

Sir Roland paces up and down,
Comes to his ftep no found ;

The mossy floor of ruin lone,
 A carpet like to this may own,
 And every cushion, couch, and chair,
 Doth green and ruffet covering wear,
 Like mofs on bank or mound.

The walls are hung, like to the screen,
 With tapestry of ivy green,
 While briar and briony
 Have casement-frame and door embraced,
 As with the ivy they are traced
 Upon the tapestry ;
 And starred and coloured like the sky
 Is all the ceiling, domy, high.

A sound like wind 'mong leaves is heard ;
 The plume upon his helm is stirred ;
 The screen is lifted, as might be
 By wind the bough of pendant tree,
 Disclosing to the wondering knight
 A banquet served on silver bright :
 Ripe fruits, red wines, and dishes rare
 That load with fragrance rich the air :
 And there around their Lady's chair
 The maidens standing, three and three —
 " Sir Knight, we wait thee now."

Sir Roland, clasp thy rosarie

And think upon thy vow.

" Now Lady, do I grieve that thou
 Hast feast prepared for me ;

From dark till dawn — 'tis in my vow —
A-fasting I must be."
The Lady laughs and comes anear —
" Sir Knight, Sir Knight of vow auctere,
Wilt deign upon my lute to hear
An air of Brittany ?"

The lute is resting on her arm
Ere he can utter word,
And soon her rosy fingers charm
To life each slumbering chord ;
At first a dull uncertain hum
From the awakening lute doth come,
Till swelling full and loud,
Responsive to her flying hand
It rises, as at tourney grand
The din of gathering crowd.

Sir Roland stoops the strain to hear ;
The memory of achievements dear
Back to his heart it brings ;
The *Laissez-Aller* shrill and clear
As from a trumpet rings ; —
Bounds from the barrier the steed
Along the lifts at charging speed ;
The shock, the crash of lance and mail,
In conflict stern, are blent,
And shout and clamour, cheer and wail,
Are up to heaven sent :
The victor wheels his charger proud,
His crested head is lowly bowed,

As up to Beauty's tent rides he—
 Soft floats the music now—
Sir Roland, clasp thy rosarie
And think upon thy vow.

Soft floats the strain. The victor's meed
 Is in his Lady's smile;
 He in her love-lit eyes may read
 The guerdon of his knightly deed,
 She to her bower shall him lead,
 A captive he the while;
 Oh who would from such thrall be freed?
 Sir Roland to the minstrel fair
 Has raised his steady eye—
 I trow no glance of love is there,
 Parts from his lip no sigh!

The strain is changed. The ringing lute
 Is smote by rapid hand—
 Now dull the heart and lame the foot
 Such music can withstand!
 And down like doves on snowy wing
 From cot to grassy lea,
 Upon the ruffet carpet spring
 The maidens, three and three;
 With wreathed arms and waving hair
 And gauzy robes that float in air,
 They meet, they mingle, part, unite
 In mazy dance around the knight,—
 But calm and cold stands he,
 As rock among the billows white
 Of the embracing sea.

The strain subsides. Each separate note
Seems faintly on the air to float :
The maidens gather three and three :
The Lady rises now —
Sir Roland, clasp thy rosarie
And think upon thy vow.

She glides to where Sir Roland stands,
The lute vibrating in her hands —
“ One measure I will dance alone—”
She deftly hangs the lute upon
His folded arms, and straight is gone.
Away she bounds, with feet that glance
And shimmer in the airy dance
In movements manifold —
“ ’T is in my knightly vow, my hand
Shall twine but with the spear and brand.”
His words are few and cold.

Away she bounds, sustained and high,
Fresh lustre flashing from her eye,
While every feature, every glance,
Seems with her giddy feet to dance
In ever changing harmony —
Pardie, the voice of lute would be
A sound discordant now !
Sir Roland, clasp thy rosarie
And think upon thy vow.

She dances round and round the knight,
As butterfly might wheel its flight

Around the crested thistle bloom —
 “ One measure dance with me — ”
 Sir Roland dips his lofty plume
 In knightly courtesy —
 “ Thanks, Lady, for thy complaisance,
 The spur is on my heel,
 I may but mingle in the dance
 Where mailèd knights a-tilt advance,
 And neighing chargers wheel.”

Still flits the Lady round the knight,
 But slowly, languidly,
 While swells and falls her bosom white
 Like that of troubled sea :
 She looks around where she may rest
 And then upon Sir Roland's breast,
 All in its iron panoply,
 She stoops her paly brow —
Sir Roland, clasp thy rosarie
And think upon thy vow.

“ Nay, let me lead thee to thy feat — ”
 Unto his breast she clings,
 Sooth, he can feel her wild heart beat,
 Vibrating through the rings
 Of all his mail. Now up her face
 She passionately turns ;
 Her snowy arms his neck enlace,
 Her red lips lifted for embrace,
 And cheek with love that burns —
 Love, love ! she looks with lustrous eyes,
 Love, love ! she murmurs through her sighs.

“ I am a Gentleman of France,
My King he dubbed me Knight,
I follow him with sword and lance
In Palestine to fight,
And till the Holy Land shall be
From the insulting Paynim free,
I swore at Mary's shrine,
For Love my heart no place should be,
Though face as fair as thine ——”

Sir Roland pauses, in surprise,
To follow with his wondering eyes
The Lady's gaze fixed on the skies.
Aye, sooth, it is the welkin blue,
With living stars, though faint and few,
That fade before the ruddy ray
Upstreaming from the coming day ;
And sooth, it is the ivy green,
But not on tapestry or screen ;
And sooth, the floor of ruin lone,
Such carpet as he treads may own ;
And sooth, such covering is found
On every shady bank and mound
As lies on cushion, couch, and chair,
For nought but bank and mound is there.

The Lady from his breast has slipped
And down among the ruins crept,
One glance — as changed that lovely fay
Before the truthful light of day
As is her dwelling — ruin drear —
From what erewhile it did appear
A château fair without compeer.

A bugle rings through forest glade,
The light of breaking day
Is cast from shining helm and blade
And caught on pennon gay :
A page and squire with spur to fide
Into the silent ruins ride :
Sir Roland on the ground they see
With bare and humble brow,
His casque beside his bended knee,
Clasped in his hand his rosarie—
He well hath kept his vow.

The Mofs-Woman.

“ For pitee renneth fone in gentil herte.”

The Mofs or Wood Folk dwelt in the forests of Southern Germany. Their stature was small and their form strange and uncouth, bearing a strong resemblance to certain trees with which they flourished and decayed : —fit residents for the wooded solitudes that for many a league shade the banks of that romantic river, which begins its course in the Black Forest and ends it in the Black Sea.

They were a simple, timid, and inoffensive race, and had little intercourse with mankind; approaching only at rare intervals the lonely cabin of the woodman or forester, to borrow some article of domestic use, or to beg a little of the food which the good wife was preparing for the family meal. They would also for similar purposes appear to labourers in the fields which lay on the outskirts of the forests. Happy they so visited, for loan or gift to the Mofs-people was always repaid manifold!

But the most highly prized and eagerly coveted of all mortal gifts was a draught from the maternal breast to their own little ones; for this they held to be a sovereign remedy for all the ills to which their natures were subject. Yet was it only in the extremity of danger that they could so overcome their natural diffidence and timidity as to ask this boon: for they knew that mortal mothers turned from such nurslings with disgust and fear.

It would appear that the Mofs or Wood-folk also lived in some parts of Scandinavia. Thus we are told that in the churchyard of Store Hedding, in Zealand, there are the remains of an oak wood which were trees by day and warriors by night.

THE MOSS-WOMAN.



'T is the looked-for hour of noontide rest,
And, with face upturned and open vest,
The weary mowers asleep are laid
On the swathes their finewy arms have made :
The rakers have gone to the woodland's edge
That skirts the field like a giant hedge,
Shelter to seek from the blinding heat,
And their humble midday meal to eat.

But one there is in that rustic band
With slender form and delicate hand,
Whose voice a tone of sorrow bears,
And whose face a shade of sadness wears :
She knitting sits apart from the rest,
With a rosy infant at her breast,
Who has played or slept in the fragrant hay,
Near his mother at work in the field all day.

Said Karl, when he led his comely bride
To his cottage down by the Danube side —
“ I'll work till arm and back shall break,
Ere Röschen ever touch fork or rake.”

But, alas for Karl! the fever came,
Stricken was many a stalwart frame,
And his Röschen the widow's tear has shed
O'er the grave where his manly form was laid.

Into the swarthy forest shade
Her pensive eye has aimless strayed,
Till it sadly rests on what seems to be
The limb of a prostrate moss-grown tree :
Suddenly down her knitting she flings,
Up to her feet with her child she springs,
For creeping silently, stealthily,
Comes the limb of the prostrate moss-grown tree.

Still on it comes, creeping silently,
Then rises erect by Röschen's knee.
" A Moss-woman! " the haymakers cry,
And over the fields in terror they fly.
She is loosely clad from neck to foot,
In a mantle of moss from the maple's root,
And like lichen grey on its stem that grows
Is the hair that over her mantle flows.

Her skin like the maple-rind is hard,
Brown and ridgy and furrowed and scarred ;
And each feature flat, like the mark we see
Where a bough has been lopped from the bole of a tree,
When the inner bark has crept healingly round
And laps o'er the edge of the open wound :
Her knotty, root-like feet are bare ;
And her height is an ell from heel to hair.

A Moss-child clasped in her arms she holds,
Tenderly wrapped in her mantle-folds;
A ghastly thing, as huelessly white
As the silver birch in the cold moonlight :
She cries to Röschen, in accents wild —
“ It is sick, it will die ; oh save my child !
Oh take to your breast my little one,
For the pitying love you bear your own ! ”

The haymakers one by one appear,
And then in a whispering crowd draw near ;
As Röschen there with her child they see,
They call to her loudly and urgently :
But clinging about her the Moss-woman stands,
With the strength of despair in her clutching hands,
And the tone of despair in her accents wild —
“ In pity, in pity, oh save my child ! ”

Then Röschen turns and solemnly cries —
“ May I ne'er be laid where my husband lies ;
May my own child perish before my face,
And I never look on his resting-place,
And long, long after him wearily live,
Oh neighbours ! if I refuse to give
This mother my help in her agony,
For her babe, to her dear as mine to me. ”

Her child at once on the ground she lays,
And a moment its rosy cheek surveys,
Then up to her shuddering breast she holds
The babe from the Moss-woman's mantle-folds :

About her bosom its fingers stray
Like twigs in the breath of departing day,
And like sound of twigs thus lightly stirred
Is its voice, in a low faint wailing heard.

With looks of pity and shame and awe
The haymakers silently backward draw,
While the Mofs-woman gazes with glistening eye
At the knitting and thread that near her lie :
She snatches them up with a sharp quick cry :
Like leaves in a whirlwind her fingers fly,
And she scarcely seems to have well begun
When every thread on the reel is done.

And now the Mofs-child's fingers small
Have stayed their twitchings and movements all,
In breathings calm ends its faint low wail,
And maple-brown grows its cheek so pale :
With joy the mother this change beholds,
And wraps it again in her mantle-folds ;
Then points to a small round ball of thread
That she by the knitting and reel has laid.

Says — “ Never again need Röschen wield
The rake in hay or in harvest field,
But calmly at home with her little one bide
In her cottage down by the Danube side :
Let her knitting be ever so fast or free
The end of this ball she never shall see,
And nought from it knitted out-worn can be
Till my sapling grow to a forest tree.”

The Vila.

“ Then he addressed him to the forest Vila.”

Vili were nymphs who frequented the forests that clothe the bases of the Eastern Alps. They have been seen traversing glades, mounted on stags; or driving from peak to peak, on chariots of cloud. Servian ballads tell how Marko, the great hero of ancient Servia, was joined in bond of “brotherhood” with a Vila, who showed to him the secrets of the future. That was when Servia was a mighty nation, extending from the Alps to the Black Sea, from the Danube to the Adriatic—before her freedom was lost at the terrible battle of Varna.

George Petrovitfch, called *Kara*, (the Black) was the son of a peasant named Petroni. “His appearance was striking and singular, he was boldly formed and above the common stature. But the extraordinary length of his physiognomy, his sunken eyes, and his bold forehead, bound with a single tress of black hair, gave him a look rather Asiatic than European.”

Long and bitterly had he brooded over his country's degradation. Eagerly he joined in her first movement to cast off the Turkish yoke—a yoke which she had borne for 400 years. By the wisdom of his counsels, his unequalled bravery, and his great and comprehensive strategical skill, he soon became the chosen leader of the patriots, and was regarded as the impersonation of the national cause. Throughout the long and varied war of independence, he played so important and conspicuous a part, that at its close he was elected chief of the state.

Wifely had the Servians chosen. What was rank or title in a cause like theirs? A man was wanted, not a name. Brave, and wise, and just, was their chief: brave, as had been shown in many a hard-fought field: wise, for in peace he devoted his whole energies to the consolidation of their liberties, by the founding of institutions, and the enactment of laws befitting a free people: just, for he caused his own brother, who, presuming on his relationship to the chief, had committed a great crime, to be hanged at his own door, and forbade his mother to mourn for him.

From stern necessity alone had Turkey resigned her claim to this fair province; and on the first appearance of European politics promising to favour her attempt, she again despatched a mighty army for its reconquest. With their wonted valour the Servians rushed to the frontier—and he who wore

her coronal, whose sword was as an army, whose preference in the fight was victory, where was the warrior chief of Servia? Irresolute, bewildered, lost, he lingered in the capital; late he came, and with him brought fear and panic. On the morrow he fled into exile—for life!

After a brief campaign, Servia was again subdued, but the Turks (in pity was it, or in scorn, or in fear? In fear, for in utter despair there is danger) left to her a remnant of her lost liberty.

For long years Kara George wandered in exile: at length, hearing that his countrymen were preparing for one more effort for freedom, he came to the frontier, and sent to inform Milosch (the then chief of the state, and his old companion in arms) where he was hiding, in readiness to join in the coming struggle. That night a messenger departed from Milosch to the man who, for memory of other days, was sheltering the homeless wanderer.

“The head of Kara George or thine own.”

He read—and obeyed.

The head of Kara George! Living, it had more terror for the foe than a rampart aflame with cannon. Dead, the vilest of the rabble of Constantinople might spit at it as he passed the city gate.

The struggle came. The Osmons were expelled the land never again to return, and Milosch was a

free Prince in Servia. But the heart that could send to ignominious death the man who trusted him—the brave, the wise, the exalted, the erring, the humbled, the penitent—prompted to acts which made his rule insupportable. He was forced to abdicate, and himself to drink of the exile's bitter cup. Then the people, remembering the hero who first led them to victory, remembering his many services and forgetting his one error, elected his son Georgevitsch, a wise and brave prince, who now rules in Servia.

THE VILA.



THE sun behind the wood-clad mountain sets,
And stealing o'er the plain comes twilight's shade,
Though glitter still the gilded minarets
Of wall-engirt Belgrade.

All day the air has slept, and slumbers still ;
No ripple on the Danube gliding by,
No stir of leaf upon the wood-clad hill,
No cloudlet in the sky ;

Unless yon silver wreath may cloudlet be,
Upfailing on the azure sky serene,
Like pleasure bark afloat, far out at sea,
When but the sail is seen.

The up-cast light that gilds the minarets
Strikes slantingly each gauzy vapour-fold,
And all its silver-tissued edges frets
With crimson and with gold.

And swiftly through the ether it comes on ;
Though yet the air, heat laden, flumbering be,
Though ripple on the river there be none,
Nor stir of leaf on tree.

And on it seated — clad in robe of white
That mingles with the vapour, fold and fold,
With streaming hair out-floating 'mong the light
That fringes it with gold —

A Vila, with uplifted, warning hand,
Upon her chariot cloud comes swiftly on —
A Vila, like a Queen of eastern land
Upon her ivory throne.

And on the water's margin it descends,
What time a pinnacle leaves the farther strand
And, tracing stealthily the river's bends,
Comes grating on the sand.

Its fingle occupant a woe-bent man,
Whose hair is whitened, not by age but grief,
Whose cheek in darksome hiding has grown wan
As hueless underleaf.

Is this the chosen of the dauntless band
That rushed like torrent down a mountain-gorge,
And swept the haughty tyrants from the land —
The patriot, Kara George ?

With warning gesture, and repellent hand
Laid sternly on the boat's uplifted prow,
The Vila hails in accents of command,
"Hold! speak! whence comest thou?"

And he, "From exile, where I've wandered long,
Waiting the hour when Servia should arise,
And cast the ruthless authors of her wrong
As low as now she lies.

"The hour has come. The cry of her despair
To other lands was passionately made;
They heard and answered not: and she will dare
Be free without their aid.

"Her children gather in the cloister's gloom,
In forest shades where swarthy lime-trees grow,
In lonely glen and cavern dark: I come
To lead them to the foe."

To him the Vila, "Back! She needs thee not.
Thou, the ungrateful! that didst from her flee
In forest need; though from her lowest hut
She stooped and lifted thee,

"And placed thee on her throne, and did entrust
To thee her dear, her new-found liberty,
When from her breast fierce Osman's race was thrust,
And she creft stood, free.

“ And when returned again that hated race,
And to the combat rushed her children all,
Didst thou in fight among them take thy place,
With them to stand or fall ?

“ The land thou hast forsaken thee forfakes ;
Hence ! and in exile linger out thy life !
For Servia now another chieftain takes
When arming for the strife.”

And he, with blush upon his visage wan,
“ I would but follow where her chieftain leads ;
I would but bleed beside the meanest man
For Servia that bleeds ;

“ I would for Servia but strike one blow —
One blow to cleanse my deep dishonoured brand ;
I would but bring to dust one Osman foe,
Then die beneath his hand.”

And she, with calm and measured utterance,
“ The foot that fled thy country in her need,
Shall never in the honoured ranks advance
That go for her to bleed.

“ No foe shall sink thy recreant hand beneath ;
No foeman's blade in battle shall be crossed
With thine, that hung ignobly in its sheath
When liberty was lost.

“No battle-field shall see thee part with life—
The death that doth the foldier true befeem—
Above thy flumbering head the affassin’s knife,
In Servian hand, shall gleam.”

And he, in humbleness, “So let it be!
And thou, oh Servia, back unto thy breast—
Though in thy sorrow I did from thee flee—
Wilt take this head to rest.”

Then she, in tones that through his bosom went,
“No; from thy country’s breast it shall be torn,
And to the foeman’s capital be sent—
A trophy and a scorn!”

And he, in voice unchanged, “So let it be!
And more, if I by suffering may atone
For my great sinning, Servia, to thee—
From me shall rise no moan.”

Then she, in tones consoling, soft and low;
“Pass to thy country and resign thy breath;
Pass, and lay down the burthen of thy woe;
Pass, foldier, to thy death—

“As true as he who in the battle bleeds:
Yea, thou art worthy of thy country yet!
And she will cherish all thy noble deeds,
Thy single fault forget.

“ And she shall be a nation, happy, free —
 Though long the struggle ere the prize be won —
And she shall give, for memory of thee,
 Her crown unto thy son.

“ Pass, chosen of the people, patriot chief;
 Pass to thy country and resign thy breath;
Pass, and lay down the burthen of thy grief;
 Pass, foldier, to thy death.”

La Dame Abonde.

—◆—
“ And Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France.”
—◆—

La Dame Abonde was the Queen of Fées. Her chosen places of abode were the forests of Lorraine—those mighty forests that, themselves unchanged, had witnessed the mutations of centuries—the hunting-grounds of the grand old Carlovingian Kings.

The duties of the Fées were numerous and important ; extending from the protection of the humblest floweret to inspiring the thoughts and prompting the actions (through the medium of dreams) of those who worked out the destinies of the nation. And never did Fée whisper word in the dreaming ear of mortal so eventful in its results, as when their Queen bade the young shepherds of Domremy repair to the Fairy Fountain, beneath the Fairy Tree, on the outskirts of the forest of Lorraine, there to be shown how she

“ might succour France.”

The fair, the noble, the heroic Joan of Arc! hear how they speak of her, the old chroniclers—

“A young wench of an eightene years old, of favour was she counted likefome, of perfon stronglie made and manlie, of courage great, hardie and stout withal.”

“She had a modest countenance, sweet, civill and resolute; her discourse was temperate, reasonable and retired; her actions cold, shewing great chastitie.”

Nay, the modern writers will not be outdone by the ancient.

“She came from the hills and forests of Lorraine—like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judæa—rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings.”

But she who by her words of hope and faith roused the youth and manhood of France from the lethargy of despair; she who led them to victory, teaching the haughty chiefs the battle-order of their legions, and the stern soldiery the time to smite and the time to spare—

“She drank not herself from that cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang together with the songs that rose in her native Domremy, as echoes to the departing steps of invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances at Vaucouleurs which celebrated in rapture the redemption of France.”

Be it so! She had lived for France, not for herself: in her life she had been assured of its freedom in the coming time, and her beatified spirit looked down from heaven on its fulfilment.

LA DAME ABONDE.



NIGHT rests upon Lorraine—still, silent night ;
The winter moon and stars, calm, clear and cold,
Shed through the thin and frosty air their light
On forest and on wold.

The forest, with its outline straight and square,
And ranks close ranged, compact and motionless,
Doth seem a warrior host prepared to dare
Stern battle in its place.

And out upon the wold, advanced, doth grow
A giant beech, that might its leader be—
Oh France, that this were so! that this were so!
And they to strike for thee!

This mighty tree upon the wold alone,
The mightiest and fairest in the land,
Was brought from realm of Faëry, ages gone,
And by a spirit hand

Was planted near the margent of yon well
That is not swayed by season, air, or sky,
That winter frosts or rains nor freeze nor swell,
Nor summer droughts can dry.

Within that beech's shadow, dappled brown,
La Dame Abonde, the star-crowned Queen of Féés,
While that the moon, full-orbed, looks smiling down,
And while that she doth gaze

Into the fountain's mirror, holds her court ;
And there, from far and near where they have been,
Her heralds and her ministers resort
To render to their Queen

Their tasks' account ; what they have done of good
To humblest flower that by the wayfide grows,
To smallest bird that pipes in hedge and wood,
Or man, as frail as those.

The moon, full-orbed, into the well looks down,
Her face is mirrored in the waters clear,
And Féés are gathering in the beech shade brown
From millions far and near.

And there, erect and tall, Abonde the Queen,
Brow-girt with golden circlet, that doth bear
A small, bright, scintillating star between
Her braids of dusky hair.

But every messenger brings tale of grief—
Of crime and suffering, of waste and want,
Of patriot's cry, despairing of relief,
Of foeman's cruel vaunt,

Of ruined homes and homesteads, fields laid bare,
Of nightly conflagrations, flaming far,
Of dreadful sounds upon the tainted air,
And all the woes of war.

To them the gentle Queen, "Be ye consoled ;
These evil days are passing to an end ;
Even now I hear her step upon the wold
To whom the foe must bend."

And, lo ! against the sky-line clearly traced,
With shadow on the moorland forward cast,
A female form, that comes with step of haste—
A maiden, nearing fast ;

Of graceful form, and meek and comely face,
And look sublimed by thought and purpose high ;—
"What seek'st thou, mortal, in this spirit place ?—
La Dame Abonde am I."

To her with modest mien replied the maid,
A gentle tremor in her utterance,
"Thou art the Lady of my dream, who said
That I might succour France."

“ And dar’st thou look upon the future ?” “ Yea,
If I may succour France by what I see—
If I may brighten but by one faint ray
Her night of misery.”

They stand upon the fountain’s dewy lip—
Straightway the Queen, with slow descending hand,
Doth deep into its crystal bosom dip
A long, white, slender wand.

A moment, and it softly is withdrawn—
The maiden’s semblance true the fountain shews,
Her father’s pasture-fields at early dawn
With flocks and kine she knows,

And there her rural home ; her mother old
Beside its open doorway weeping stands,
And there her father stern, her brothers bold,
And one with clasped hands—

“ Forfake me not, my promised bride !” And she,
“ I am the promised bride of France ; and great
Her longing for my coming, mournfully
Doth she look forth and wait.”

Again the wand is on the waters laid ;
Its ripples spread and shift and undulate—
Again within it mirrored is the maid,
But now in halls of state,

The halls of Vaucouleurs, with glancing lights,
And sparkling feast upon the ample board ;
High dames and nobles, gallant squires and knights,
Around its brave old lord.

The maid stands in the midst with lifted hand,
“ I claim a guide and escort to the King ;
Up, Warriors of France, and grasp the brand,
The wine-cup from ye fling ! ”

Again upon the waters falls the wand,
And straight the scene is to a palace changed—
The King and courtiers gay, linked hand in hand,
For dance and sport arranged ;

The maiden at the monarch's knee doth plead,
“ Is this a time, uncrown'd King of France,
While that thy cities blaze, thy subjects bleed,
To tread the idle dance ?

“ Lift up thy bannered lilies ! ” While she spoke
The shining wand descended on the well,
Smiting with rapid and indignant stroke,
And resting where it fell.

Rise on its ruffled surface roof and tower,
As of a mighty city seen by night,
While over all dark clouds of tempest lower,
With lightning darting bright.

And light more terrible than lightning, din
More dread than that which on the lightning waits—
A leaguered town ; want, pestilence within,
And foemen at the gates.

Now who shall save in this extremity ?
The wand is from the fountain drawn, and lo !
An ambushed band, with bannered fleurs-de-lis,
Doth burst upon the foe,

And they are scattered and the city free !
Joy, joy and triumph now for woe and wail ;
Bend to the leader of that band the knee—
A youthful maid in mail !

Upon the well the wand descends again—
The victor band is by the maiden led
Against a host embattled on the plain,
The host erewhile that fled.

Long, long and stern the struggle ; veteran pride
And strength and hardihood and courage true,
United, strive to stem the fiery tide
That bursteth through and through

Their long grim line that riseth like a wall ;
Till gap on gap enlarging, meet, unite ;
And few are they who stand to them who fall,
And weary they who smite.

The wand dips to the fountain as before—
For battle-plain is seen a sacred pile,
All banner-hung from altar-dais to door,
And 'long each pillared aisle ;

And scroll and blazon speak of victory,
While at the altar-stone the maid doth bow ;
And there the King, anointed, bends the knee,
The crown upon his brow.

The wand is stayed descending. Instant shifts
And fades the scene. No other takes its place.
Nought but the placid moon. The maiden lifts
Unto the Queen her face,

Enquiring earnestly, " And is it free ?
My country, is it free ?" The Queen, " Thus far
Prosperity. Thus far from victory
To victory the war.

" 'Tis past. Upon the future dar'ft thou still
Look out ? 'Tis dark with many woes."
The maid, " Of past or future, good or ill,
Prosperity or loss,

" Take I no note but as it toucheth France.
I dare look out upon the dark." The wand
Is reared and poised, like javelin or lance,
With white compressing hand,

And struck into the wave that flashes high
And gushes o'er the marge, and foams and heaves,
And moans and welters as in agony,
As when an arrow cleaves

The cuirafs and the breast of living man.
Behold upon the fevered wave, back toffed,
The bannered fleurs-de-lis, the broken van
Of a recoiling host,

Back, back within the city's sheltering walls. —
Foe-fronting stands the maiden as of yore ;
They come, they round encompass her, she falls,
A captive, bleeding fore.

Again the wand, with dull and fullen sound,
Falls prone upon the wave. — A dungeon drear,
A crouching form upon the dark, damp ground,
The maiden's armour near.

Again, and yet again, and yet again,
Like to a death-bell hammer, heavy, slow,
The wand descends, and with a deep refrain,
Responsive to each blow,

The waters answer as they darkly part —
A city old, with lofty tower and spire ;
Long streets with rushing crowds, and on the mart
A foldier-guarded pyre.

And through the mocking crowds the maid is led—
A living fea that round her sways and bends ;
Upon the dark pyre she is bound, and red
And swift the flame ascends.

The wand is waved above the well. The scene
Hath passed away. No other takes its place.
Nought but the moon. The maid then to the Queen,
With calm but earnest face,

“ Now is it free ? My country, is it free ? ”
The Queen with radiant smile glanced at the well,
While round her head the wand flew rapidly
And on the waters fell.

In wild turmoil they move—wave breaking quick
On wave, bearing upon their ridges crest
And plume of knights a-charge, and forest thick
Of spears laid stern in rest :

Gay banners flutter, fall, are trampled, torn,
By hand, by hoof of steed, by wheel of car ;
But still the fleurs-de-lis are bravely borne
Above the waves of war.

Around and levelled, pitiless doth come
The wand with lash on lash, till every trace
Of wave or war is gone, and only foam
Is on the fountain's face—

And lo! from out the foam, in lengthy line,
Like to a flock of sea-birds on the wing,
The white sails of a fleet upon the brine,
Departing, lessening.

And fast as they recede, and on the brine
Their swift and furrow-tracing keels advance,
Arise the purple boskage of the vine
And sunny fields of France.

Low droops the maiden's head; while careful tears
From her o'erbrimming eyes fall fast and large.
The scene hath passed. The moon's faint rim appears
Upon the fountain's marge,

And lesser grows, and less, and fadeth quite.
The maiden stands alone; but fast and far
Is shooting down the forest glade a bright
And scintillating star.

“Thou shalt be free!” She sayeth only this,
Out-passing from the shadow of the tree,
In low soft tones of quiet happiness—
“France, France, thou shalt be free!”

FAIRIES
OF THE
FIELDS AND MEADOWS.

The Wee Fair Folk.

—♦—
“ And in their courtes make that round
In meadows and in marshes found,
By them so called the Fairy ground,
Of which they have the keeping.”
—♦—

The Wee Fair Folk appear to have been more widely scattered than any other branch of their race. Traces of them, more or less distinct, are to be found in all the West and North of Europe ; but it is in Scotland that they seem to have been most numerous, and to have lingered the latest. They lived in the sunny meadows, and had for dwellings the interior of little moss-crowned hillocks, round which they led their dances, tracing on the grass circles of the deepest green. Within these circles it was dangerous for mortals to rest or sleep, for the Fair Folk generally punished such transgressions severely ; either the offender was made lame for the rest of his life, so that he might not be able to repeat the offence, or he was stricken with some disease of which he died before the end of the year. This punishment may be viewed as unmeritedly severe, but it must be re-

membered that these fairy dwellings were peculiarly exposed to the depredations of the mischievous or dishonest; and when the transgression was made with no dishonest intent, or from no vulgar curiosity to pry into the affairs of the Fairies, no punishment was inflicted. On the other hand, to those who protected, or otherwise shewed regard for, these their chosen places of residence and recreation, they were ever grateful,—as shewn in the old rhyme—

“ He wha tills the fairies’ green,
Nae luck again shall hae;
And he wha spills the fairies’ ring
Betide him want and wae—
For weirdlefs days and weary nights
Are his till his decein’ day.”

* * * * *

“ He wha gaes by the fairies’ ring
Nae dule nor pine shall see,
And he wha cleans the fairies’ ring
An eafy death shall dee.”

THE WEE FAIR FOLK.



PART I.

“ We the orphan’s head will shield ;
You an hour shall later spin,
I will sooner go a-field,
Little Lily’s bread to win.”
Thus the kindly neighbours said —
“ We will shield the orphan’s head,
We will win the orphan’s bread.”

Her father perished in the wave,
Years ago and far away ;
They laid her mother in the grave
Only yesterday ;
Ere her weary spirit fled
To her orphan child she said,

“ The goal is won, my race is run,
And past my sorrowing,

To a land beyond the sun
I am journeying ;
Your father with a seraph band
Stands upon the golden strand,
And beckons with his shining hand —
Seek us in the spirit-land."

Lily, Lily, whither now
With your flowing hair
Backward streaming from your brow,
Neck and shoulders bare ?
Whither with your earnest eyes,
Bluer than the summer skies,

Little feet that scarcely press
The gowan to the grass,
Tottering with eagerness,
Lily, as you pass —
Whither with your happy smile,
Talking, talking all the while ?

'Cross the green and o'er the stile,
Down the shady lane,
Saying, with your happy smile,
" We shall meet again.
Mother, with the seraph band
Stand upon the golden strand,
Guide me with your shining hand ;
I seek you in the spirit-land."

Down the shady lane, between
Hedge-rows close and high,
Out into the meadow green
Spread from sky to sky—
“ Show to me your shining hand ;
Guide me to the spirit-land.”

O'er the meadow, on and on,
With her weary feet,
O'er the meadow, all alone,
In the summer heat ;
The boundless meadow, that doth lie
Like a sea 'tween sky and sky.

“ I will rest a little space—”
She sinks upon the ground ;
Lo, a fitting resting place
Her glowing cheek hath found ;
A hillock all with mosses grown,
Tawny, green, and russet brown,
Soft as tufts of eider down.

Lo, a fitting resting place
Her weary feet have found ;
An ell beyond the hillock's base,
Circling it around,
A ring of deeper, darker green
Than aught upon the meadow seen.

Head on hillock, feet on ring,
Arms crossed on breast —
“ Mother, in my journeying
Watch me while I rest ;
Stand upon the golden strand,
Watch me from the spirit-land.”



PART II.

HARK ! the little hill within
Humming strange is heard,
Like the million voicèd din
When the hive is stirred ;
Left and right, by cords unseen,
Parts a tuft of lichen green,
Showing archèd gate between.

A horseman comes, with horn at lip
And bell at bridle rein,
With jewelled hand and filken whip
Resting on the mane ;
Then two heralds side by side
In their broidered vestments ride.

Sounds the horn—a pause succeeds—
Come the King and Queen,
On their prancing milk-white steeds,
In their mantles green—
Mantles that to fetlock fall;
Sceptre, star, and coronal.

Lord and Lady, Squire and Knight,
Chamberlain and Groom,
Steeds of grey and steeds of white
Prancing, prancing come;
Houfings all with jewels sheen,
Plumes and scarfs and mantles green.

Round and round and round the ring,
Three and three they ride,
Triple row encompassing
The hill on every side:
Sounds the horn. Each hoof is still,
And all stand fronting to the hill.

Thrice the herald, every time
With a louder call,
“Behold, behold, behold the crime,
Behold the criminal!
A mortal sleeping on the ground
That girds the Fairy Palace round!

“ Court of Fairy, what shall be
That mortal’s punishment ?”
Every eye is instantly
On the sleeper bent ;
All are silent, not a word
From the triple row is heard.

Cries the second herald, “ Ho !
For that she is young,
For that she doth dwell below
Strangers all among,
For that she is pure and good,
And oh, too, for her orphanhood,

“ Court of Fairy, set her free !
Let the sleeper go !”
Every tongue cries instantly
From the triple row,
“ Free ! free ! Set the sleeper free !
Free as when she came go she !”

Rides the Queen within the ring,
And her beaming eyes
Their light upon the sleeper fling.—
“ Never frown,” she cries,
“ Shall fall where smile of mine has lain ;
Nor cloud of sorrow, care, or pain,
Shall dim thy skyey glance again.”

Rides the King within the ring,
Sceptre lifted now
Till it may its shadow fling
On the sleeper's brow :—
“ Name thy dearest wish to me,
And accomplished it shall be
Ere another summer see
Flower on mead or leaf on tree.”

And the sleeper—did she hear?—
Maketh this request :—
“ Be anear me, mother dear,
Watch me while I rest ;
Let me join the seraph band ;
Take me to the spirit-land.”

Sounds the horn. Left and right
Wheels the triple row,
Steeds of grey and steeds of white
Prancing, prancing go ;
Houfings all with jewels sheen,
Plumes and scarfs and mantles green,
Fairy Court and King and Queen.

Sun is setting. Silver Moon
Trembles in the skies ;
Night is coming—coming soon—
Mists and vapours rise :
Lily looks up from the ground ;
There the neighbours standing round
Have the little wanderer found.

Again, ere flower in mead is found,
Or leaf on tree is seen,
The weeping neighbours stand around
Another hillock green :
There Lily sleeps — but sleeps beneath —
Sleeps the dreamless sleep of death.
She has joined the seraph band ;
She is in the spirit-land.

The Lutin.

—♦—
“ And late repentance which shall long abide.”
—♦—

The Lutin of Normandy in many respects resembled Robin Goodfellow. Like him he had many names, and like him had the power of assuming many forms ; but the Lutin's pranks were usually of a more serious nature than those of the “ tricky spirit ” of Merrie England. Many a man laid his ruin at the Lutin's door ; although it must be confessed that in these cases neighbours were uncharitable enough to say, that the Lutin had less to do with it than habits of Want-of-thrift and Self-indulgence. Thus, on market days when a farmer lingered late over his ale, either in driving a close bargain or in enjoying the society of a boon companion, he declared the Lutin was sure to play him some spiteful trick on his way home : his horse would stumble—he would be thrown—he would lose his purse—or lose his way. If the farmer persisted in these habits, more serious would become the Lutin's tricks : the sheep-pens would be unfastened, the cow-house and stable doors left open, and the flocks and cattle be found in the

morning among the standing corn and unmown hay ; while every fervant on the farm would fwear to his own innocence, and unhesitatingly lay the blame on the Lutin. Similar tricks were played on the fishermen by the *Nain Rouge*—another name for the Lutin. He opened the meshes of the nets and set the fish free; he removed the floats and let the nets sink to the bottom ; or the sinkers, and let the nets float away on the retiring tide. True, if closely questioned, the fishermen would confess that on these occasions the night was dark or stormy, the bothy warm, and the grog plentiful ; and that instead of drawing their nets at the proper time, they had delayed it till morning. Again, he would appear like a little black nag, ready bridled and saddled, quietly feeding by the way-side ; but woe to the luckless wight who mounted him !—unless indeed he did so for some charitable or holy purpose, in which case he was borne with the speed of the wind to his destination. In this form the Lutin played his wildest pranks and was called *Le Cheval Bayard*.

THE LUTIN.



ON his little black nag rides the good Father Paul,
With a blessing and smile for the villagers all ;
“ Ah, bless the good father,” the old folks say,
As he trots through the village and down the roadway ;
“ And bless the black nag,” cry the children all,
“ That carries so lightly the good Father Paul.”

As down the still roadway the good father goes —
A green grassy lane between sunny hedgerows,
Where the wild vetch stretches its tendrils fine
Till its sky-hued blooms with the wild rose twine —
His little nag suddenly swerves and flies
At a man that asleep by the roadside lies.

To his feet in a moment he laughingly leaps,
And round his right hand to his forehead he sweeps,
And raises his cap from his curly hair
As he jauntily bends with a courtier's air,
And pleasantly smiles with his bold bright face —
’Tis Antoine, the well-favoured scant-of-grace.

“ Not here should be lying a widow’s son,
Not thus did your father live, Antoine ;
All day at his work in his field he kept,
And at night at home in his bed he slept,
And duly on Sabbath at church was seen—
But ’t is long since his son in that place has been.”

“ True, father, I know I’m an erring sheep—
What a beautiful pony is this you keep !
With his arching neck and his springy limb,
And his rounded joint so smooth and flim,
An ear like a squirrel, and what an eye !
Not Bayard himself—” “ My son, fie, fie !

“ Liken him not to the Lutin, I pray,
Nor name the horse-fiend in that graceless way,
Left (although you may now my warning flight)
Antoine, left you ride him yourself some night.”
Then the good father rattled his bridle-rein,
And trotted away down the greeny lane.

“ If he come in the shape of that nag of thine,
Or be he a fiend or a sprite divine,
I will mount him, I, come weal or come woe,
And give him the rein where he lists to go ;
On road or in field, by sun or moonlight—
Pardieu, I would ride him this very night

“ He is gone with the foldier’s widow to pray,
 And will reach her cottage at twilight grey ;
 An hour at the leaft he will there remain,
 And will leave the pony to feed in the lane :
 There’s a path through the marfh that is fafe by day ;
 I could reach the cottage as foon as they.

“ At Alençon to-morrow is market-day,
 And the next but one is the fête of Bernai ;
 But at either of thefe he known might be ;
 I could crofs the Seine to the camp at Puy*,
 Where the tents are pitched on the clifffy fhore ;—
 He will fell for a hundred louis-d’or.”

A backward ftep and a forward bound—
 He is over the hedge on the furrowed ground,
 And breaks away with the ftride of a deer,
 Unheeding a voice that pleads in his ear—
 “ *Antoine, ob Antoine, add not crime to crime,
 Stay, ftay and repent while there yet is time !*”

It is not a voice of mortal breath,
 It founds like his father’s, long mute in death,
 And earnestly, fervently, with him it pleads,
 Yet never he halts or its pleading heeds—
 “ *Antoine, ob Antoine, add not crime to crime,
 Stay, ftay and repent while there yet is time !*”

* The remains of a large intrenched camp are yet to be feen near the village of Puy, on the coaft of Normandy.

“ Monfeigneur’s hunter I’ve ta’en from the stall,
And led him pafst grooms and lackeys and all ;
And my Lady’s palfrey untied from the gate,
While her page with her maid in the arbour fate—”
“ *Antoine, ob Antoine, add not crime to crime,
Stay, ftay and repent while there yet is time !*”

“ From the trooper’s tent his charger I’ve led,
Though trooper and charger both fhared one bed ;
On the farmer’s beaft I have galloped away,
While he ftayed for the wine I had drunk to pay—”
“ *Antoine, ob Antoine, add not crime to crime,
Stay, ftay and repent while there yet is time !*”

Again he comes into the narrow roadway,—
There feeds the black nag in the twilight gray ;
He lays his right hand on the foulder fo fleck,
The faddle-girth feels, fets the bridle apeak—
“ *Antoine, ob Antoine, add not crime to crime,
Stay, ftay and repent while there yet is time !*”

On tip-toe he ftands and looks carefully round,
Then into the faddle he vaults from the ground—
“ Ha, ha, dying folks, for yourfelves you muft pray !
Fair godmothers, alter the chriftening day !
Gay bridegroom, your work-a-day jerkin don !
The prieft cannot come, for his nag is gone !”

Aye, gone like an arrow from archer's bow
When his stern eye covers the breast of a foe,
And nothing is heeded and nothing is seen
The breast and the keen arrow-head between ;
So sudden the flight and so great the speed,
So straight the course of the little black steed.

A rise in the saddle the rider just knows,
And over the hedge like a bird he goes ;
Though the field in furrows lies fresh and deep,
No swallow did ever its surface sweep
With its jetty wing on its headlong flight,
As the little black steed skims o'er it to-night.

Again down the echoing road he flies ;
What lights are these that before them rise ?
A row on each hand till they both unite—
“ Nay, not through Alençon ride we to-night.”
He stoops and takes in each hand a rein,—
But motionless both at his sides remain !

All motionless, arm and hand and rein,
Like the closed links of an iron chain
That rigidly, helplessly bind him down,
And on they go galloping to the town.—
He must keep the saddle, come weal or come woe,
And the horse wherever he lifts may go.

The breath that streams from his nostrils wide
Leaves a luminous track on either side,
Flat back in his neck lies each quivering ear,
And his eyeballs bright as the lamps appear,
As he gallops between the shining rows,—
And the rider the terrible horse-fiend knows.

To the right, to the left, the townfolk fly,
To the right, to the left, with shout and with cry ;
They get but a glance of a steed coal-black
With a death-pale rider upon his back.—
The rows of lamps in behind them glide,
And out in the moonlight again they ride.

The terror that lifted his every hair
Is subsiding in passionless, blank despair ;
And his father's voice that pleaded in vain,
By his side, now in prayer, he hears again—
“ *For the widow's sake spare the widow's son,
Her last, her cherished, her only one !*”

Away over pale, over dyke, over wall,
Through underwood dense and through forest tall,
Upbreasting the steep and scouring the plain
And cleaving the fields of girth-deep grain—
“ *For the widow's sake spare the widow's son,
Her last, her cherished, her only one !*”

Again through the echoing streets away,
Past the gaudy booths for the fête of Bernai ;
All silently, swiftly behind them glide,
And out in the moonlight again they ride—
“ *For the widow's sake spare the widow's son,
Her last, her cherished, her only one !*”

Past chateaux stately and high they sweep,
Past huts where the humble peasants sleep ;
Over vine-clad hill, over barren plain,
And into the tide of the rapid Seine—
“ *For the widow's sake spare the widow's son,
Her last, her cherished, her only one !*”

The foaming waves on his breast that break
Unite in a long white streak in his wake ;
The waters behind them silently glide,
And out in the moonlight again they ride—
“ *For the widow's sake spare the widow's son,
Her last, her cherished, her only one !*”

'Gainst the moonlit sky, like sails on the sea,
Stand the snowy tents of the camp at Puys ;
Over mound and fosse and entrenchment deep,
And up on the breezy plateau they leap—
“ *For the widow's sake spare the widow's son,
Her last, her cherished, her only one !*”

Ere the sentinel scared his breath can bring,
Or his matchlock up to his shoulder fwing,
On the cliffy ledge of the ocean shore
They hang—they sink—and he sees no more ;
But a shriek of horror and wild despair
Comes up from the deep on the midnight air.



Now the faded leaves from the trees come down ;
The hedge-rows are open and bare and brown ;
No bloom of the wild vetch, no bud of the rose
By the cheerless and shelterless roadside blows ;
And wittfully noting these changes all,
A stranger comes seeking the good Father Paul.

His face so haggard has once been fair,
And countless the curls of his snow-white hair ;
His thin lengthy limb as a lance is straight,
And the width of his chest even yet is great—
“ ’T was summer with me, and ’t was summer with all,
When here I last met with the good Father Paul.”

The villagers cluster at window and door—
They seem to have seen this stranger before!—
And the children look up and in wonder stare
At the tall pale man with the snow-white hair :
And wittfully noting these changes all
He enters the dwelling of good Father Paul.

Long, long his confession, his vows sincere,—
The good father trembles the tale to hear
Of his fearful ride, and cry of despair
From the lonely deep on the midnight air ;
Of answering fishermen nearing fast,
Of months in fever and frenzy past.

“ Pray often, pray often for me, Father Paul,
And pray for the generous fishermen all,
Who spread their nets on the moonlit sea
By the cliffy shores at the camp at Puy. —”
That night the widow embraced her son,
Her erring, her lost, her found Antoine.

The Monaciello.

—◆—
“ This is fairy gold, boy, and 'twill prove so.”
—◆—

The Monaciello or Little Monk seems to have lived exclusively in that portion of Southern Italy called Naples. The precise place where he dwelt does not appear to be accurately known ; but it is reasonably supposed to have been in some of those imposing remains of Abbeys and Monasteries, that crown many of the picturesque hills of this most picturesque country. When the Monaciello appeared to mortals, it was always at the dead of night ; and then only to those who were in forest need, who themselves had done all that mortal could do to prevent or alleviate the distress that had befallen them, and after all human aid had failed. Then it was that the Monk appeared, and mutely beckoning them to follow, he led them to where treasure was concealed— stipulating no conditions for its expenditure, demanding no promise of repayment, exacting no duty or service in return.

Men have vainly asked, was it actual treasure he gave, or did it merely appear so to the external

fenfes, to be changed into leaves or ftones when the day and the occafion of its requirement had paffed? And if actual treasure, how did it come in the place of its concealment, and by whom was it there de- pofited? Was it ill-got gain, the unbleffed fruits of ufury, and the fin of its accumulation to be thus wiped out by its charitable after-ufe? Was it the price of yet darker guilt, with the red ftain of bloody fingers on the coins, that holy ground alone could cleanfe? Or was it the golden fruits of peaceful induftry, the offerings of piety, treafured up for occafions of love and charity? Enough to know that it was always believed to be actual treasure; enough to know that it always fufficed for the requirements of thofe who received it; enough to know that it was always worthily beftowed.

In Germany, the wood-fpirit Rubezahl performed fimilar acts of beneficence and kindnefs to poor and deferving perfons; and the money he gave proved to be, or paffed for, the current coin of the realm: while in Ireland, the O'Donoghue, who dwelt beneath the waters of an inland lake, and rode over its furface on a fteed white as the foam of its waves, diftributed treasures that proved genuine to the good, but fpurious to the undeferving.

THE MONACIELLO.



FROM Naples' smooth and tideless bay,
From high St. Elmo's towers of fame,
To where, like dawn of grandest day,
Vesuvius lifts his crest of flame,
And to the sunny hills beyond,
So sweet a homestead there is not
As that Francisco's father owned,
In this fair land the fairest spot.

Light labour his, from year to year
His olive-rows to prune and train ;
For helpmates and companions dear
His gentle wife and children twain :
And twisting, twining, warp and woof,
The vine ran out its tendrils strong,
Till door and window, wall and roof
Were hid the foliage among.

One day came to this home of peace
A trader on the faithless main,
Who viewed content as blameful ease,
And talked of merchandise and gain.

“ One venture,” cried he, “ on the seas,
Where fortune ever waits the brave,
Were more than from your vines and trees
In fifty summers you could save !”

When from the house the trader went,
Low stooping 'neath its porchway green,
Ah, with him parted the content
That had erewhile its inmate been !
*One venture on the bounteous seas,
Where fortune ever waits the brave,
Were more than from my vines and trees
In fifty summers I could save.*

One venture on the bounteous seas—
’T was like an echo, ever near,
Neglected were his vines and trees
Its dulcet whisperings to hear.
There fortune ever waits the brave—
He borrowed florins thousands three,
And for them bond of surety gave
On home and homestead, land and tree.

The venture failed. As comes the tide
Of ashes black and scorching flame
Adown the trembling mountain-side,
So on his heart the tidings came :
And never smiled he from that day,
Or spoke, to hope or to repine ;
And soon beneath the sword he lay,
As 'neath the lava lies the vine.

To-morrow muft the bond be paid,
No day of refpite will be given ;
Francifco well may bow the head,
And well may call for aid from Heaven.

“ ’Tis not becaufe I loathe to give
For daily hire my daily toil,
Or in a rented hovel live,
And for a ftranger dig the foil ;

“ ’Tis not becaufe I dread to fee
The axe among my father’s trees,
Though every branchlet has for me
A ftore of blifsful memories ;
Nor is it for the grief I feel
From this my childhood’s home to part,
Though here would found a ftranger’s heel
As if ’t were treading on my heart.

“ Thefe uncomplaining I could bear,
But, oh my fifter, fair and young !
And, mother, with your filver hair,
For you, for you my heart is wrung !”
With brow bent to the ground he cries —
“ The orphan’s promifed ftay art Thou ;
In Thee the widow’s fhelter lies,
In Thee, in Thee ! O help us now !”

While thus upon the ground he kneels,
Nor found is made, nor fhadow thrown,
Nor touch is given, and yet he feels
He is not in the room alone :

And lifting up his streaming eyes
Upon a presence strange they rest ;
Stands there a Monk of dwarfish size,
In cloak and cowl of sable dressed :—

His eyes like stars in winter night
Beneath their sombre covering gleam,
His face is shadowy and white
As mist that hangs o'er marsh or stream :—
A moment there in silence stands,
And beckons with uplifted hands ;
Then through the open door he glides,
And after him Francisco strides.

And when he gains the outer door
The Monk stands by the garden gate,
With sign to follow as before
Impatiently he seems to wait ;
Points to a trench where stands a spade—
The silent gesture is obeyed—
Then through the open gate he glides,
And after him Francisco strides.

Down, down the bowery mountain-side,
And through the wooded glen below,
Where orange-groves their riches hide,
And branching limes and citrons grow ;
And up the vine-clad terraced steep,
Through moonlight clear and shadow deep,
Still on the Monk in silence glides,
And after him Francisco strides.

And never loses he nor gains,
Or up the steep or 'mong the trees,
Or whether at his speed he strains,
Or halts, his failing breath to ease ;
And past the hill-top row of vines
That like a wreath its brow entwines,
Still on the Monk in silence glides,
And after him Francisco strides.

And out upon a plateau green,
Where lie an abbey's ruins grey,
The friendly cedars try to screen
For love of days long passed away,
When they as yet but saplings were,
And stately stood the abbey there :
The Monk beneath their shadow glides,
And after him Francisco strides.

O'er mossy mound and ivied stone,
Past arch and tower that crumbling fall,
Through court and square with weeds o'ergrown—
The chapel yet has roof and wall,
As if when Time came to efface
He lightly touched the Holy place :
The Monk into the chancel glides,
And after him Francisco strides.

All round the silent chapel wall
As dark as vault or dungeon seems,
Save where through oriel window tall
The moonlight in a current streams :

The Monk stands in the stream of light,—
No shadow on the floor is cast,
Each beam comes on as straight and white
As if through faintest cloud it passed :—

Stands listening on the moonlit ground
With warning finger raised, and soon
Comes from the campanile the sound
Which tells that night has reached its noon :
The lifted hand is motionless
At every bell-toll but the last,
When sudden points it to the place
Where faint the outer beams are cast.

Upon the spot Francisco leaps ;
Glints fire from meeting steel and stone,
And high around the earth he heaps,
But still the spade goes dashing on.—
He thinks upon his sister fair,
He thinks upon his father dead,
He thinks upon the silver hair
That crowns his widowed mother's head.

Yet faster goes the trenchant spade,
Till back against his breast 't is sent
With splintered shaft and broken blade,
As down upon a rock it went ;
The fragments on the floor are flung,
Down, searching, kneels he on the stone,
His hands are driven the earth among,
And up the massy rock is thrown.

And after it a casket, bound
 With brazen band and brazen clasp,
That gird and fold it round and round,
 And brazen hinge and lock and hasp :
It falls upon the trench's brink,
 And scarcely can Francisco rise
When limbs relax and bend and sink,
 And on the yielding mould he lies.

He looks up to the flickering light
 That slanting down the wall is cast—
Still there the eyes so strangely bright,
 And cloak and cowl, though fading fast.
But ere the light is wholly gone,
 While yet the form, though dim, is there,
He hears in sweet and solemn tone—
 “ *Francisco, Heaven has heard your prayer !* ”

The Fairy-Woman.

“ When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.”

The Fairy-Woman who plays so earnest a part in the following ballad, was probably one of the Tylwith Teg (Fairy Family) of Wales. They lived on a lovely island in a lake among the mountains of Brecknock. It was unseen from the outer margin of the lake, and utterly unapproachable, as no boat made by mortal hands could float upon these waters: even birds of the air were unable to fly over them. A secret passage connected it with the mainland, passing under the bottom of the lake and opening in a cavern in the mountains, by which the fairies visited the external world, and on occasions conducted mortals to the island. This last, however, they were soon obliged to discontinue, on account of the cupidity and rudeness of their visitors. One person even attempted to drain the lake, thinking by this means to be able to reach and plunder the island; but so far from accomplishing his purpose, the waters

rose higher and higher, and had he not speedily relinquished his designs, the whole country would have been inundated.

The desire that the Fairy-Woman manifested to cross the Wye, before the expiring of the year, may be accounted for by the fact, that all fairies, on specified occasions, were required to present themselves, either at a given place of rendez-vous, or at the court of Fairy-Land, to give an account of their present and past duties, and to receive instructions for the future. Thus a legend of the Isle of Man, and the Fairy Faith in this island scarcely differs from that of Wales —

A fairy whose duty it was to present himself at the Court of the Fairy King on the night of the harvest-moon, so far forgot his spiritual nature that he remained in the glen of Rushin, making love to a Manks maiden. For this he was condemned to be covered with long shaggy hair, (hence his name Phynnodderee) and in this form to remain on the Isle of Man till doomsday. Great had been the crime, great was the punishment; yet was it not altogether without points of alleviation. He could still dwell in the lovely glen where dwelt the mortal maiden for whom he had so greatly sinned, for whom he must so greatly suffer—was still left to him the consolation of making green her grave, as only fairies could, ages after the close of her brief earthly life.

Old folks say, that for many a year he lived in the glen, employing his time in helping the poor and deserving cottagers, aiding them in the work of farm and dairy, until one whom he had benefited rudely affronted him; when, with a melancholy wail, he departed, and has never been seen since in Ruffen. So say the old folks, but the young ones tell the tale with a difference. Say they — The good Fairy King, commiserating the condition of poor Phynnodderee, has mitigated his punishment, has recalled him to his own land, and reinstated him among his kindred; and that the melancholy wail with which he departed was caused by his quitting the place of the maiden's rest, for which the prospect of all the joys and delights of Fairy-Land could not console him.

THE FAIRY-WOMAN.



COME, children, gather round the hearth,
I promised you a tale to-night :
Of sorrow shall it be or mirth ?
Of Baron bold or Lady bright ?
Boys, stir the log. Or shall it be
Of dauntless Knight with lance in rest ?
Or one where gentle Charity
Crept nestling to a miser's breast ?

Come, little Apple-cheeks, choose you ;
What shall it be, what shall I tell ?—
“ A Fairy tale that's true—all true—”
Good, Blue-eyes, you have chosen well :
So shall it be. Dear wife, your seam
Put down, and listen with the rest.
And close the lamp ; the ruddy gleam
Of fire-light for a tale is best.



THE last night of the gray Old Year
Was wearing fast away,
The New Year suddenly stood near—
Rude fire and son were they.

The Old Year raved with moan and shout,
And rocked his snowy head,
And toffed his bare, lean arms about,
While bitter tears he shed :

His big tears pattered on my fire,
And plashed against my pane—
Ah, thankless son ! Ah, wrathful fire !
No love between ye twain.

Aye, I remember well ! I sat
Before my fire alone—
I see the fire as plain as that,
Though twenty years are gone !

'T was in a wooden hut upon
The green banks of the Wye,
With sedges thatched ; and there alone,
In muffings wrapped, sat I.

For then I had nor rick nor field,
Sheep had I not nor cow ;
The river was the farm I tilled,
The ferry-boat my plough.

Thus mufing fat I. Hark, a tap—
Ere I could reach the door,
Again, another, rap on rap,
Each louder than before.

I raifed the latch ; with boifterous shout
The rude wind pafit me fwept ;
Upon the darknefs I looked out,
And into it I ftepped,

And looked around : then I could fee
Between me and the light—
The black behind and over me
As I flood in the night—

A woman, fhivering in the cold ;
Beneath the eaves fhe flood,
Grief-laden, weary, faded, old,
In tattered cloak and hood.

She pointed to the rufhing Wye,
White flooded by the rain—
Like to a fteed it galloped by,
The foam upon its mane—

And faid, “ Good Boatman, take me o’er ;
The Old Year dieth faft,
And I muft reach the farther fhor
Before his hour be pafit.”

“ I may not brave the river’s ire,”
 Quoth I, “ on such a night ;
 Come, shelter take beside my fire,
 And wait till morning light.”

And she, with sharp and eager cry—
 “ Now, now ! Take double fare :
 Haste, ere the moments pass that lie
 Between me and despair !”

“ No, not for fare a hundred fold
 Go I till morning light ;
 I will not tempted be for gold
 To lift an oar to-night.”

Said she, sad-voiced, as one might speak
 Whose latest hope was gone,
 And who had nothing more to seek
 On earth—“ Gold have I none,

“ A silver coin, one single coin,
 Have I, and nothing more,
 In this small purse, and both were thine
 To row me to yon shore.”

Quoth I, much moved, “ The stream is strong,
 The gusty wind is high,
 And sweeps the blinding rain along,—
 ’T were risk of life to try.”

Cried she with vehemence, " Life ! life !
Dost hold it then so dear ?
Wouldst guard thy little span of strife
At such a price as Fear ?

" And what risk I ? Look here ! Look, look !"
She screamed in accents wild,
And from her breast an infant took —
" A mother risks her child !

" Wilt take me o'er ?" No word I spoke,
I led her to the boat ;
The flashing oars bent to my stroke
As wave on wave I frote :

We reached the bank, the boat swung round,
I fet her on the land ;
And turning to my oar, I found
Her purse beside my hand !

" That I deprived you of your mite
Shall ne'er be said of me :
I risk not life for hire to-night,
But all for Charity."

Into her lap the purse I flung —
A strong push from the shore —
The village bell loud clanging rung ;
The Old Year was no more !

Mid-channel I had gained — What lies
Beside me on the feat ?
The purfe ! May I believe my eyes ?
I half rose to my feet.

Thought I, I saw it reach her lap :
'Bout ship ! (my oars I ply)
I shall return it, be my hap
To sleep beneath the Wye !

Between the river and the sky
The open common lay,
And there her form I could descry —
She journeyed on her way.

I reached her side. “ A boon to me,
Take back your purfe and mite ;
I work for kindly Charity,
And not for hire to-night.”

She held her hand — it shone like snow
At sunrise, rosy-white !
Then hand and purfe she drew below
Her cloak, out of my sight :

But I thought as I stood, that her cloak and hood
As the mountain-ash were green ;
And among their folds, like marigolds,
The links of her hair lay shewn :

And her eyes were bright as is the light
Of the glow-worm in the grafs ;
And her breath came sweet as the airs that greet
The wild thyme where they pass.

I reach my boat—I grasp my oar—
Aflant up stream I steer—
Give way, with will! Give way! The shore
At every stroke I near :

I shipped my oars—rose to my feet—
Prepared to leap to land—
When lo! again upon the feat
The purse, beside my hand!

Then, dear ones all, then did I know
That she, who in her need
Had urged me with such words of woe,
A Fairy was indeed!

But what her grief, or what her fear,
Or why she needs must go
Across the Wye, ere died the year,
Nought did I ever know.

But from that time I've gathered wealth,
Scarce knowing whence it came ;
And, rarest boon on earth, sweet health
Have all who bear my name.

And nightly in the purse there lies
A coin—the double fare—
A little silver coin it is—
Aye, Blue-eyes, you may stare,

But it is true, all true, I have
Them in this hand of mine :
Behold the purse the Fairy gave,
And this night's silver coin !

The Fairy Boy.

—◆—
“ Dwells in all heaven charitee so deare.”
—◆—

The Fairy Boy of the following ballad may be viewed as a type of the Fairies or Good-Neighbours of Caledonia. No where did they hold such frequent and familiar intercourse with mankind as in the “ North Countrie.” There, borrowing and lending were of daily occurrence. Many a weary ploughman has found at the end of his furrow a clean white napkin spread on the sward, on which were a cup of milk, and a loaf “ that tasted like wheaten bread mixed with wine and honey.” Often, too, did they come to borrow, or beg, some article of domestic use ; but, it was sometimes thought, rather to test the dispositions of the individuals to whom the request was made, than from any real want experienced by the applicant.

“ A young woman was one day sifting meal, warm from the mill, when a nicely dressed, beautiful little woman came to her with a bowl of antique form, and requested the loan of as much meal as would fill it. Her request was complied with, and in a week she returned to make repayment. She set down the bowl

and breathed over it, saying, 'Be never toom' (empty). The woman lived to a great age, but never saw the bottom of the bowl."

The fairies of Scotland were very beautiful—

"Their ringlets of yellow hair floated over their shoulders, and were bound over their brows with combs of the purest gold. Their dresses consisted chiefly of a mantle of green silk, inlaid with eider-down, and bound round the waist with a garland of wild flowers. Over their shoulders hung quivers of the adder's skin, stored with arrows dipped in flame. A golden bow hung negligently over the left arm, and little scimitars of the same metal glittered at their sides."

But it must be remembered that they also had the power of assuming any form they pleased, and of passing through the air and over the deep as easily as over the land.

The ancestors of the present proprietors of Colzean Castle were familiarly called the *Lairds of Co*, from the Cos or Coves (caves) six in number, in the rock on which the Castle is built—a huge basaltic cliff overhanging the sea on the Ayrshire coast.

The legend of the "Fairy Boy and the Laird of Co," is well known in the Scottish Lowlands.

THE FAIRY BOY.



PART I.

THE Laird of Co has left his hall,
And stands alone on the castle wall, —
His castle that hangs o'er the ocean-waves,
And rests on the roofs of the Fairy-caves.
Oh, sad and penfive there he stands,
Though his eye sees nought but his own broad lands,
Or far or near where his glance may go —
And keen is the glance of the Laird of Co !

“ A fond farewell, ye scenes so dear,
A long, a last farewell, I fear,
For a boding voice seems whispering me,
' You never more these scenes shall see.'
But a tyrant's foot must now be stayed,
And my King has asked my sword in aid ;
So fare ye well, 'tide weal or woe,
'Tide life or death, to the Laird of Co !”

Now rests his eye on the pennon gay
Of a bark that rides in the open bay,
And spreads before the freshening gale
The swelling breast of her snowy sail;
While youthful squire and stalwart knight,
With helm and corset glancing bright,
Along her decks impatient go—
“ You tarry long, oh Laird of Co !”

“ That comrades brave for me should wait !”
He quickly gains the castle-gate,
But there a boy before him stands,
A tiny cup in his tiny hands.
“ My mother dear is weak and old,
Our home is dark, her couch is cold;
One cup of wine on her bestow
For charity, oh Laird of Co !”

“ Has never yet with will of mine
Unheeded been such prayer as thine.
Ho ! Steward, take the boy with thee
And fill his cup for charity.
For charity ? Poor child, I pray
When from such tale I turn away,
I dwell in home as dark and low
As thine, that now am Laird of Co.”

With rapid step he bends his way
To where the bark rides in the bay,
Her decks with arms and armour piled,
When comes the Steward, staring wild.

“ That urchin ftrange — his elf-made cup
A butt of wine hath fwallowed up !
Yet not a drop doth in it flow —
Some fiend he is, oh Laird of Co ! ”

“ Or fiend or fairy, fprite or child,
Good Steward, let his cup be filled,
If wine enough of mine there be,
For well you know my word hath he :
Aye, every drop into it pour,
Till drained be every vault and ftore ;
Pour till his beaker overflow —
Broke never his word a Laird of Co. ”

Now back again the Steward hies,
And views the cup with wondering eyes,
While trembles every joint and limb —
One drop has filled it to the brim !
The boy departing foftly faid,
“ When he on clay-cold couch is laid,
In home like mine, as dark and low,
I will repay the Laird of Co. ”

PART II.

Oh, many a summer sun has shone,
And many a winter blast has blown,
Since failed to foreign wars away
The bark that rode in the open bay!
And they who were but children then
Are women grown and bearded men,
And the old are gone where all must go—
But comes not home the Laird of Co.

In cell where sunlight never falls,
And the damp runs down the blackened walls,
And slowly, darkly tracks its way
'Mong rotting straw on the floor of clay,
And rufts the fetters strongly bound
Around the captive on the ground,
So wan from suffering and woe—
Is this the comely Laird of Co!

“ A foldier's death and foldier's grave,
On battle-field with comrades brave,
With lightfome heart I freely dared,
Nor of them thought, nor for them cared;
But thus, like felon vile, to lie
In hopelefs, blank captivity,
In dungeon dark and damp and low—
And I was once the Laird of Co!”

What light, what light, like noon-tide clear,
Illumes the dungeon dark and drear ?
What hand the door flings open wide,
As bar and lock-bolts backward glide ?
A child beside the captive stands,
His bosom crossed with folded hands,
“ I come to pay the debt I owe.
Arise, arise, poor Laird of Co !

“ Arise, for thou art free again—”
His hand but touched the captive’s chain,
And link and loop and lock and all,
Like frost-nipped leaves in Autumn fall :
And strong and stalwart under him
Becomes each shrunken, wasted limb,
And he steps as stepped he long ago,
When he went to the wars, the Laird of Co !

They mount the steep and winding stair,
Where dust makes thick the scanty air ;
And through the gates that open stand
They pass unchallenged, hand in hand.
The boy’s bright eyes are fixed on high—
His right hand pointed to the sky—
His foot he strikes on the earth below—
“ Now mount with me, oh Laird of Co !”

Then up, up, up, to the starry sky !
They cleave the air that rushes by ;
And on and on, o’er wood and lea,
O’er lake and river, shore and sea :

While hamlets small and cities vast,
With blended lights, go glancing past,
And fade away in the gloom below —
Where journeys he, the Laird of Co ?

On earth again, and hand in hand
Before a castle's gate they stand —
A castle that hangs o'er the ocean-waves,
And rests on the roofs of the Fairy-caves.
“ Farewell, I thus the wine repay
You gave for blessed charity,
And your word held sacred long ago.
Farewell, farewell, good Laird of Co ! ”

FAIRIES
OF THE
HILLS AND CAVES.

The Brown Dwarf.

—♦—
“ Gold, gold, gold, gold !
Bright and yellow, hard and cold.”
—♦—

The Brown Dwarfs occupied seven of the “ Nine hills” on the west point of Rügen. The White Dwarfs occupied the other two ; and the Black— for there were three descriptions of Dwarfs on the island, named from the colour of their garments— dwelt in the coast-hills, and the caves along the sea-shore.

Tradition thus accounts for the formation of the “ Nine hills :”—

“ A long, long time ago there lived in Rügen a mighty Giant, named Balderich. He was vexed that the country was an island, and that he had always to wade through the sea when he wanted to go to Pomerania and the mainland. He accordingly got an apron made, and he tied it round his waist, and filled it with earth, for he wanted to make a dam of earth for himself, from the island to the mainland. As he was going with his load over Rodenkirchen, a hole tore in the apron, and the clay that fell out formed the ‘ Nine hills.’ ”

The Brown Dwarfs were beautiful little creatures, and good as beautiful. Many a poor widow has seen through her tears a shining gold ducat lying in

her path ; many a child that had lost its way in the woods has been guided through the darkness of night to its father's door ; and although it had seen no creature, had ever heard in the rustling forest leaves little footsteps leading the way : many a hungry orphan that had wearily fallen asleep by the wayside, has found, on awaking, bread in its lap and a silver coin in its hand : and these were the doings of the little Brown Dwarfs.

But although much of their time was thus given to acts of "Charity and Mercy" they had their own innocent merry-makings ; and the chief of these was to come forth in the bright moonlight to dance in the meadows, dressed in their gayest attire—cap, jacket and pantaloons of fine brown velvet, with buttons of frosted silver, and flippers of colourless crystal. On these occasions it behoved them to be very careful not to lose any article of their dress, for they could never replace it. If they lost a flipper, they had to go barefoot until it was found ; if the bell from their cap, they could not close their eyes in sleep until it was recovered ; and if the cap itself, they with it lost their power of invisibility. Hence their intense anxiety to recover any of these articles when lost, and the reason for their acceding to almost any demand to redeem it.

The legend of "John Wilde and The Brown Dwarf" is well known, and variously related, in Rügen.

THE BROWN DWARF.

THE sun, with his round face all a-glow,
Looks over the hill on the fields below ;
And the lark that rests in the furrow still,
When he sees the sun peep over the hill,
Springs skyward, singing his matin shrill
Over the fields of John Wilde.

John Wilde is a farmer in Rügen's isle,
Not the sun himself has so cheery a smile,
Or a face so ruddy and bright and round ;
Not the lark's clear song has so blithe a sound,
As he skyward mounts with bound on bound,
As the song of John Wilde.

'Tis a brave old Runic rhyme he sings,
As his team so fleek to the plough he brings ;—
Just a gentle shake of the long loose rein,
And the willing beasts on the plough-gear strain,
And the coulter shears the sod in twain ;—
Cheerily goes John Wilde.

Tink, tink, tinkle, tink. The lark is mute,
The horses stay the uplifted foot,
And the blithesome song John sings so well
Is hushed as if by a fairy spell,
At the tinkling faint of a tiny bell
At the feet of John Wilde.

He lifts a cap, like the cosy house
Of a provident, home-loving, bachelor mouse;
A little round cap made of velvet brown,
All quilted with fatin and padded with down,
And for tassel a silver bell on the crown —
“What a cap!” cries John Wilde.

“’T will fit my own little one fine,” he said;
“God blefs every curl on that darling head!
Some child has lost it when here at play —
What troops there were when we carried the hay!
I’ll warrant it wept for it bitterly:
Poor wee thing!” says John Wilde.

“They footed it here till the sun was set —
Aye, there are the marks of their footsteps yet:
The dancing all in a ring has been —
Not a drop of dew on the grafs to be seen —
’T is a ring where the Dwarfs have danced, I ween —
The Brown Dwarfs!” says John Wilde.

Then on he goes to the end of the field;
The horses round on the furrow are wheeled;

Lo ! back at the spot where the cap he found
A child-like form is searching around,
Over ridge and furrow and fallow ground —
“ A Brown Dwarf ! ” says John Wilde.

A twitch at the cap as the plough shears past —
Tink, tink, tinkle, tink, and the plough stands fast !
A laugh and a shake of the long loose rein,
And the willing beasts on the plough-gear strain,
And on they go shearing the sod again —
“ Ho ! ho ! ho ! — ” laughs John Wilde.

Again at the end of the field he wheels ;
The Dwarf is following close at his heels,
His eyes bent mournfully down on the grafs —
So blue they are ! and as bright as glafs —
“ I have lost my little brown cap, alas !
Have you seen it, John Wilde ? ”

His tight-fitting jacket is velvet brown,
With silver buttons the breast adown,
And a row round his waist so slender and neat ;
His trim pantaloons, gathered plait on plait,
In folds outfall o'er his tiny feet —
“ Have you seen it, John Wilde ? ”

In slippers of crystal his feet are placed,
With ribbons of scarlet cross-wise laced :
John Wilde looks down at the little bare head,
With its flood of curls on the shoulders spread —

“T is juft like the darling’s I left in bed —
Here it is !” cries John Wilde.

Then the cap at once from his breaft he takes,
And a fmile like light o’er the Dwarf’s face breaks ;
But a sad cloud follows, for back in his breaft
John buttons it under his ample veft —
“ Without it I neither can sleep nor reft,
Oh give it me, John Wilde !”

“ Yes, yes — but — juft a furrow or two
I’ll turn — and — then — I’ll its price tell you : ”
A hafty jerk of the long loofe rein,
And the startled beafts on the plough-gear ftrain,
And on they go fhearing the fod again ; —
Thoughtfully goes John Wilde.

The fun’s hot rays, now fierce and red,
Come ftreaming down on the little bare head ;
With his hand he tries his head to fhield,
For fhade there is none in that open field —
John Wilde, is your heart againft pity fteeled ?
“ Oh have pity, John Wilde !”

Thoughtfully, moodily, filently,
Through the long, long hours of the fummer day
John holds to the plough, and at twilight’s clofe
He haftily fays as he homeward goes—
“ To-morrow at dawn I’ll the price propofe.”
“ Oh, have pity, John Wilde !”

The first faint ray at the chill dawn shed
Was caught in the curls of the little bare head,
And the noon's white glare it shelterless met ;
John comes not down till the sun is set —
“ I have not fixed on the price of it yet ;
One day more,” says John Wilde.

Next morn dense vapours obscure the plain
That end in a drizzling, ceaseless rain,
Rain, rain, ever rain, all the day, all the day,
But the little Brown Dwarf in the field must stay ;
John Wilde comes not till the twilight grey —
“ Yet one day,” says John Wilde.

Another day, and it lingers on,
Another hour, and the day will be done ;
Through the weary time the little bare head
Has down in the rain-fodden furrow been laid ;
It is lifted now at a loud quick tread —
“ Oh, have pity, John Wilde !”

“ Three days have I lost. Three days ! I have tilled
In three summer days the whole of this field,
Now my horses stand idle in stall, I vow,
And there lies rusting my best new plough !
Why every furrow were worth to me now
A ducat,” cries John Wilde.

“ My cap, my cap, and a ducat I'll lay
In each furrow you turn till your dying day !”

“ A ducat in every furrow ! ” cries John.
“ My cap, and a ducat in every one.”
“ A bargain—a bargain! Your hand. Done! done!
Take the cap!” cries John Wilde.

With a cry of joy as sharp as of pain,
He leaps at and seizes his cap again ;
Beneath it his eyes like diamonds gleam —
Tink, tink, tinkle, tink. He is gone like a dream !
John Wilde dashes homeward to fetch his team —
It is sunfet, John Wilde !

With a beating heart a furrow he tries —
A bright gold ducat before him lies !
A shout and a jerk and lash of the rein,
And the smarting beafts on the plough-gear strain,
And on they go shearing the fod in twain —
“ Rare harvest ! ” cries John Wilde.

He ploughs till the sun has sunk to rest,
And while lingers a line of light in the West ;
And at dawn again in the field does he stand,
Clutching the rein with a feverish hand —
“ I will plough up every fod of my land —
Every fod ! ” cries John Wilde.

So from dawn till dark, and from day to day,
Till summer and autumn have passed away,
Through heat and through cold, through drought
and through rain,

At the plough, at the plough does he drive and strain,
Till each meadow is furrowed and furrowed again
And again, by John Wilde.

Like stone now winter has frozen the soil,
Yet John at the plough is seen to toil,
Though he scarcely the reins in his hands can hold,
Though his coffers are heaped with ducats untold ;
For strong as despair grows his thirst for gold —
“ Gold, more gold !” cries John Wilde.

His face is haggard, his looks are wild,
And frighten his forrowing wife and child ;
And as ever and ever the plough goes on,
And never a seed is in furrow sown,
The neighbours say, “ Ah, his wits are gone !
He is crazed ! Poor John Wilde !”

The wind sweeps over the open vale,
And the snow-flakes strike like sharpest hail ;
The jaded beasts hang low the head
As they home return, undriven, unled :
John Wilde in a furrow lies stiff and dead —
Stiff and dead lies John Wilde.

The White Dwarf.

—+—
“ Soe hardie and foe gentil.”
—+—

The White Dwarfs dwelt in the other two of the “ Nine hills ” of Rügen. During the stern northern winter they remained shut up in their hills, fashioning weapons and ornaments of the most exquisite form and workmanship, in steel, silver, and gold ; but on the return of spring, and throughout the summer and autumn, they lived in woods and groves, and in secluded places by the margins of lakes and running waters, going forth into the open country only by night. When they went forth by day, it was always singly, and in an assumed form—that of butterfly, dove, or singing-bird.

In these excursions they carefully searched for those persons who, unmeritedly, were suffering want or distress, and exerted themselves in alleviating their condition. And in those ruthless times of piratical expeditions and depredations, there was no lack of employment for the good little Dwarfs ; for no one whose dwelling was near the shore was safe from

robbery, captivity, or death. In the twelfth century, the isle of Rügen was not only entirely in the possession of the lawless sea-rovers of the Baltic, but it had been by them so strongly fortified, that Waldemar the Great of Denmark, with the whole military resources of his kingdom, and aided by the forces of Henry the Lion of Saxony, failed in subduing it until after the sixth or seventh expedition. Nay, the sea-rovers did not confine their depredations to the shores of the Baltic and Northern seas; on one occasion, led by a daring chief, with a fleet of 100 sail, they penetrated the Mediterranean; and after ravaging the coast of Spain and Africa, and the Balearic Isles, they appeared before the ancient Etruscan city of Luna, which they plundered and destroyed.

THE WHITE DWARF.



SIR OTTO lies in dungeon cold,
Heavy his heart the while,
In the dungeon cold of a pirate hold
On Rügen's lonely isle :
'Neath the cloud of night came the rover band,
And burst o'er the Pomeranian strand ;
By sea and by land, with sword and with flame, —
Sudden and terrible they came.

Now happy they in death that lie
Upon their threshold stone,
The captive's sigh and stifled cry
And hopeless woe, unknown.
By the grating clouded and thick with dust,
And its massy bars all red with rust,
Sir Otto stands, and with wistful eye
Looks out on the sunlit sea and sky.

Over the sea, out in the light,
Up in the breezy air,
Winging its flight on pinion bright,
Fluttering, hovering there,

Then swooping, swooping down on the main,
 And skimming its shining face again,
 Now shimmering below, now glancing above,
 Nearing the isle comes a snow-white dove.

“Bright bird, bright bird, to me doft bring,
 Over the waters drear,[†]
 On thy blessed wing, the comforting
 That liberty is near ?
 As of old, bright bird, doft thou bear green leaf
 In token of succour to ’fuage my grief ?
 Oh, when on the land fhall my footstep be ?
 Bringeft thou hope, sweet bird, to me ?”

Over the fea, over the fea,
 Nearing the pirate hold—
 “Of liberty bringeft hope to me,
 As of old, bright bird, as of old ?”
 On, on to the barren verge of the ifle,
 And under the fhade of the gloomy pile
 That falls like a frown on its plumage white—
 Then vanifhing from Sir Otto’s fight.

“Return, return, and with me reft—”
 The bird of Hope is gone ;
 The heaving breaft of the knight is preffed
 Againft the grating ftone,
 And his head is bowed and his eye downcaft—
 But fudden he starts—What fhadow paffed ?
 What downy wing brushed over his hair,
 As bowed with forrow the knight ftood there ?

He looks, he listens ; of fight or found
Nought can he see or hear ;
Of fight or found the dungeon round
There's nought to eye or ear ;
Nought but a cup and a crust on the floor,
Near the dark and mouldy prison door. —
“ I am weak with fasting, and fore a-thirst ;
The water, the blessed water first.”

He lifts the cup with eager hands —
“ I have not drunk to-day.”
With outstretched hands he shuddering stands
And turns his eyes away,
For a loathly toad in the water lies,
Watching the knight with its gliftening eyes,
With its swollen sides and unshapely back,
Spotted and mottled with yellow and black.

A moment, and with gentle smile
He turns the thing to see —
“ 'Tis without guile thou dost defile
The water set for me ;
And it lessens this burning thirst of mine
To see thee so happily slaking thine ;
Nay, look not with timid eye on me, —
I would not hurt thee for liberty.”

Again the cup stands by the door,
The good knight turns to go,
He paces o'er the prison floor,
Feeble his step and slow —

“ Now my hunger and thirst alike are gone !
 But my limbs are weary and cold as stone ;
 One look, one look at the sunlit sky,
 Then down on my pallet of straw I'll lie.”

The straw is scanty, damp, and old,
 Into the earth-floor pressed ;
 The knight is cold, weary and cold,
 And there alone may rest ;
 But he backward starts, for up from the bed
 An adder crefts its crested head,
 With venomed fang and with flaming eye,
 Hissing and glaring wrathfully.

“ I am a-weary,” quoth the knight,
 “ And grave-cold is the ground ;
 And,” quoth the knight, “ since morning light
 I've paced this dungeon round,
 And fain on that straw my limbs would fling,
 But I seek not strife with living thing,
 So while on the grave-cold ground I sleep,
 Thy place on the straw, poor reptile, keep.

“ I'll rest where I may see the sky —
 Seems that I stronger grow !—
 May see the sky while that I lie
 Upon the earth below ;
 Through the grate see the sunlit sky above—”
 Lo, the dove, the beautiful snow-white dove,
 Within the bars, on the window-fill,
 Sits pruning its plumage with careful bill !

“ Beautiful bird, haft heard my prayer,
And come to dwell with me ?
Haft heard my prayer and come to share
My lone captivity ?
Lefs drearily now will pafs away
The long, long night, and the longer day,
And pleafant my bitter cruft will be
When shared, companion fweet, by thee !

“ And thou the green and waving trees,
Companion, wilt forego ;
The waving trees that in the breeze
Do rock thee to and fro ;
The breeze that fings through thy quivering wings,
The buds and bloffoms and all bright things,
Thy neft in the pines, and thine own dear mate
That fhall watching for thee in the gloaming wait.

“ Hafte, hafte thee to thy woods again,
And leave me here alone !
I would not gain by other’s pain
A folace for mine own :
By thy downy fide let me fold thy wings,
For the duft to the rufty grating clings,
And I’d grieve to fee thee with fpeck or ftain —
Hafto to thy home in the woods again !”

Over the fea, out in the light,
Up in the breezy air,
Winging its flight on pinion bright,
Paufing never there ;

As it paused, and hovered, and swooped erewhile,
When nearing the barren verge of the isle,
But straight and steady it wings its flight,
Till lost to the eye of the captive knight.

'Tis lost to the eye, but yet he stands ;
Remains of it no trace ;
Yet there he stands with clasped hands
Eyeing its parting place :
Lo, the snowy wing of the dove again,
Fast isle-ward speeding across the main !
The wing of a dove or a shallop-sail
Outspread to the summer evening gale ?

A sail, a sail ! and right and left
The parted waves are cast,
To right and left the waters cleft
In lines of foam are cast ;
On, on to the verge of the barren strand,
And up on the beach of shingle and sand,
Then rustling down through the freshening gale
Come the rippling folds of the snowy sail.

A child-like form leaps to the land,
Snow-white the garb he wears,
And in his hand a gleaming brand
With jewelled hilt he bears ;
O'er the massy iron bars 't is drawn,
Rapid and light as a ray at dawn,
And they fevered lie on the dungeon floor
Like rushes the reaper's blade before.

“ No more shalt thou in dungeon weep,
Sir Otto, thou art free ;
Come forth and sweep the briny deep
That parts thy home and thee.

“ Sir Knight, receive this Elf-made brand,
Before whose trenchant blade
Can nothing stand that human hand
And human skill have made :

“ Sir Knight, that didst but gently smile,
Or shuddering turn away
From reptile vile that did defile
Thy cup wherein it lay :

“ Sir Knight, that didst in pity spare
The venom'd adder's life,
’Tis thou may'st dare this brand to bear
And wield in knightly strife.

“ Sir Knight, that didst set free again
The dove from prison lone,
That wouldst not gain by other's pain
A folace for thine own :

“ Sir Knight, that wouldst not captive keep,
No more shalt captive be ;
Come forth and sweep the briny deep —
Come, gentle Knight, with me.”

Over the sea, over the sea,
Before the freshening gale,
Over the sea like wild-bird free
Now speeds the snowy sail ;
Away, till the Pomeranian shore
Arises the shallop's prow before,
And far behind lies the gloomy pile
On the verge of Rügen's lonely isle.

The Black Dwarfs.

—◆—
“The very wind
For the wrecker.”
—◆—

The Black Dwarfs inhabited the coast-hills and caves along the shore—it was said, for the purpose of plundering the vessels wrecked on the inhospitable island of Rügen. Many a wrecker declared that the Black Dwarfs had always the best share of the prize; for that they had underground communication from the beach to the breakers, through which they passed, and intercepted the most valuable parts of the cargo; and they farther affirmed that in the pauses of the storm they had heard the mocking laughter of the Dwarfs, when the wreckers came too late to the scene, or were otherwise disappointed in the looked-for plunder: it has been suggested, that this seeming rivalry in their barbarous calling, and mockery at their want of success, was meant by the Dwarfs to deter them from its pursuit—that they voluntarily took the blame of participating in it, in order to move the pity

of the wreckers for the poor mariners, who had thus not only to contend with the winds and the waves, but with these supermortal enemies on the shore. If such were their object, they had a difficult task to perform, and long had they to wait for its accomplishment; for the inhabitants of the Baltic sea-borde clung to the practice of wrecking as tenaciously as their forefathers had clung to piracy. Indeed, one of the best of the Kings of Sweden—Christian II.—lost his crown mainly by his efforts to put a stop to this inhuman occupation. Even the highest dignitaries of the Christian church struggled to justify and continue it. The Bishops of Vorglum and Viborg and the Archbishop of Lunden openly exclaimed against the law which abolished the right of plundering shipwrecked mariners. “All three,” says a contemporary writer, “were accustomed to send out their men to the coasts, to seize on all the property which the tempest threw on the shore, and to kill without pity any of the crew that ventured to resist spoliation.”

Although the Black Dwarfs had for their habitation the coast-hills and caves, the favourite place for their feasts and carousings was under the spreading branches of the Elder-tree, the strong perfume of its large moon-like flowers being very grateful to them. An unexplained connection of a mysterious nature existed between this tree and Elf-land—known only to persons who had sojourned there for a season.

THE BLACK DWARFS.



PART I.

“THE wind is up! I can hear his shout
Yet thriller, fiercer grow;
No star from the murky sky looks out;
The sea is white as snow.

What a night for a wreck! Up, Mina, wife,
And fetch me my hatchet, my hook and knife!
’Tis hard if this sea and sky and wind
Do not a ship for the breakers find.”

“Oh Ludwig, husband, again to be—
To be as we have been!
My Ludwig, so happy a pair as we
Was not in Rügen seen.
Oh, my joy to see your returning sail!
And to hear your laugh and cheery hail,
When your nets were cast and your lines were laid,
Ere you followed the wrecker’s dreadful trade!”

“ ’Tis a trade that a man may thrive in, wife.
Hark to the roaring sea!
My gear, my gear! Hook, hatchet, and knife!—
Rare music it is to me!
Boom! boom! comes the sound of the distant swell—
I warrant ’tis ringing some vessel’s knell:
Wife, wife, this sea on the shore will fling
More wealth than a season’s fishing would bring.”

“ A moment stay while the torch I light
To show upon the strand—
A beacon to catch the swimmer’s flight,
And guide him to the land.
Then let me this night in your labours share,
And I by your side the torch will bear.
Stay, Ludwig, the torch! Do you hear me call?
The torch!—For His sake who died for all!”

But Ludwig along the founding beach
Is striding on his way,
Just out of the rushing water’s reach,
Through showers of flying spray:
For the waves come twisting and writhing in,
Uprearing their crests with a hissing din,
And twining like snakes up the shelving strand,
Then dying in foamy coils on the sand.

And now the cliffs that landward kept
By the water’s margin go,
And the wind the open beach that swept
Wails fitfully and low.

From the water's margin, gloomy and tall
The cliffs ascend like a fortrefs wall ;
And like fortrefs gate lies the narrow way
Through the flanking crags to a sheltered bay.

'T was there, where the blackened ruins stand
On the steep crags overhead,
In the fierce old times a rover band
Their daring stronghold made :
In the bay their barks they could safely moor,
From the winds and their foes alike secure ;
For narrow and perilous is the way
That leads through the surf to the rovers' bay.

And Ludwig knows that from left and right
The whirling eddies sweep,
And all in the gorge of the bay unite
In circles dark and deep ;
So there with his wrecking hook in his hand,
Close watching the current, he takes his stand ;
While out through the clouds breaks the struggling moon,
And the stars will come forth from their hiding soon.

From farthest sea to nearest cliff
Nothing but spray and foam—
Billow and breaker in deadly strife
Wherever his eye may roam ;
And the beach—Ha ! up on the shingly beach,
Hauled out of the whirling water's reach,
Are piles of boxes, and casks and bales,
With coils of cordage, and planks and sails.

A muttered oath. "Too late am I here!
Fool! fool! my old luck still."
When, harsh and dissonant, on his ear
Falls laughter loud and shrill;
And a voice, that sounds like a hafty flame
Confuming green twigs, pronounces his name;
While faces grim from the ruins peer out
And greet him with laughter, shout on shout.

"They laugh that win—'tis a faying old—
And ye have won the game;
But I'll see who hide in the pirate hold,
And mock me by my name."
His hatchet and hook on the ground he flings,
And up the steep face of the cliff he swings;
From crag to crevice he daringly creeps,
And over the wall on the summit leaps.

In an open court or roofless room—
Stand yet the blackened walls,
On which the moonlight through the gloom
In flakey patches falls—
In this court or room, from the seaward side,
An Elder-tree spreads its branches wide,
With close thick foliage, darkly green,
And bunches of cold white flowers between.

And under the shade of the Elder-tree,
With faces quaint and old,
And dark as the Elder-berries be
When Autumn winds blow cold,
Sit scores of Dwarfs on the dewy ground,
All ranged in a circle the stem around,

While their glittering eyes to the Wrecker turn—
Fierce eyes that with malice and hatred burn.

And one with a flagon hastens up,
The red wine at its brim ;
And Ludwig takes the maffy cup,
Embossed from stem to rim ;
Shall he drink, or pour it out at his feet ?
How strong its aroma !—heavy and sweet.
He tastes—he drinks without flint or doubt,
And is greeted with laughter, shout on shout.

It floods as with light his throbbing brain,
Around his heart it glows,
And out to the end of each pulfing vein
Like liquid fire it flows.
He has taken his feat on the dewy ground,
He shares in the flagon that paffes round,
He welcomes the fong as each verfe rings out
With chorus of laughter, shout on shout.

SONG.

When down from the Norland dark and cold
Comes the wind, the fierce north wind,
Leaving its snowy lair behind,
And leaps, like a wolf on a fleeping fold,
On the Baltic fea —
Chorus. Ha, ha ! we laugh
And the red wine quaff
Under the Elder tree !

When on to the shore the ship is driven
By the wind o'er the maddened sea,
On the breakers shivered to be,
And timber by timber asunder riven,
On the Baltic sea—

Cborus. Ha, ha! we laugh
And the red wine quaff
Under the Elder-tree!

When her drowning crew despairing cling
To the long sea-weed on the shore,
Then sink, to be seen no more
Till the sea them up on the beach shall fling,
The Baltic sea—

Cborus. Ha, ha! we laugh
And the red wine quaff
Under the Elder-tree!

But all her treasures we save from the waves,
And casks of the red red wine
We drag from the seething brine,
And store them safe in the secret caves
By the Baltic sea—

Cborus. Ha, ha! we laugh
And the red wine quaff
Under the Elder-tree!

PART II.

Old Mabel sits at her cottage door
 Adown the forest-way —
The dark green ivy has clambered o'er
 Its thatch and walls of clay,
Till it looks a part of the beeches green,
As it nestles beneath their leafy screen—
Witfully watching the closing day
She sits at her door down the forest-way.

'Tis said of parents both she was 'reft
 In helpless infancy ;
Not one of her kin or name was left,
 Nor friend in the world had she ;
That the Elf-folk came, and with gentle hand
They bore her away to their own green land,
Where the sun never sets, the flowers never fade,
Where three times seven long years she stayed.

One summer eve, by her cottage green
 Beside the beechen wood,
Sedately spinning was Mabel seen
 In comely womanhood.
Ah! you little would think those locks of snow —
For all this was many a year ago —
That those locks of snow which you look on now
Lay yellow as amber on Mabel's brow.

She fits and watches the clofing day —

“ Grief never enters there ”—

Do Mabel’s thoughts to the Elf-land ftray

Where never is pain or care ?

On her foulder is laid a trembling hand —

Were Mabel’s thoughts in the green Elf-land ?

Fall the beeches’ fhadows fo deep to-night ?

Or was Mina’s ftep ’mong the leaves fo light ?

“ A tale of forrow you have to tell,

Of forrow and of fhame ;

Poor Mina, I know it all full well,

And why to me you came :

Aye, I know your husband’s abhorrent trade,

And I heard the pitilefs words he faid

When forth laft night in the ftorm he went,

And I know the place where the night he fpent.

“ I faw him drink with no word of grace

The Dwarfs’ unhallowed wine,

I faw him among them take his place

With no protecting fign ;

And I faw the fire fafh over his brain

And lighten along each throbbing vein,

As reckleffly from the cup he drank

’Till fenfelefs upon the ground he fank.

“ I faw this morning his look of fear

When kneeling by the brook

That fplafhed in his face, fo cool and clear,

As draught on draught he took ;

And I heard his cry of terror and pain
When the water to flake his thirst proved vain,
And he rushed from the bank and homeward flew,
And bit the green leaves by the way that grew.

“ I see him now as he fiercely churns
 White foam between his teeth ;
 His mouth like a heated furnace burns —
 Air, air, that he may breathe !
Now he strikes his breast and he rends his hair,
For the air, the beautiful evening air,
Only fans the fire in his heart and brain
And quickens the pulse in each fevered vein.

“ The crime, the punishment I have seen —
 Poor weeper, dry your tears ;
 Through clouds, that darkly intervene,
 Before my fight appears
A cure—an atonement—a second cure :
Though the first may fail, yet the last is sure :
By you, Mina, you, may the first be won ;
But the last by himself—by himself alone.

“ The blooms are white on the Elder-tree,
 A moon, and they have been ;
 Another—and faint brown streaks I see
 Upon the berries green ;
Then the Harvest-moon, like a spirit bright
On a mission of love, glides through the night,
And her blessed light on the fruit is shed
Whose blossoms breathed over his slumbering head.

“ Quick, quick and gather, ere yet a stain
Of black be on them cast ;
They’ll quench the fire in his heart and brain —
The clouds o’er all have passed.
Of the second, if aught I see or know,
Yet, seeing or knowing, I nothing may shew,
By himself must that cure be fought and won,
The atonement made by himself alone.”

PART III.

With feeble limb and drooping head
Comes Ludwig to the shore —
“ I fain would see my boat,” he said,
“ And the wide blue sea once more.”
How altered now is his finewy frame !
Thin, shrunken, consumed by the inward flame
That scorches him ceaselessly, night and day,
That nothing can mitigate, nothing allay.

At first he wandering sought relief
And easement of his pain
In well and fountain, root and leaf,
On mountain and on plain :

Now his strength is gone, and he scarce can creep
To the lonely verge of the silent deep,
Where his stranded shallop for months has lain
In the blistering sunshine, and wind and rain.

“ Together here we are flung at last
To rot upon the shore,
Like wrecks the angry deep has cast,
To float—ah, never more!
Shall you never more from the sea-beach spring?
Never more the breeze through your cordage sing?
Never more your keel o'er the blue waves dance?
Never more your sail in the sunlight glance?

“ And shall I never more”—remorse and shame,
New, strange, intense, he feels,
Till every nerve in his wasted frame
Is shaken as he kneels;
There he kneels, though storm-clouds lurid and dun
Hang lowering over the sinking sun,
Like the smoke that o'erhangs a leaguered town,
Or a burning ship that at sea goes down.

And Mina, whither so late alone?
The wind blows fitfully,
And the conscious sea, with sigh and moan,
Is moving restlessly,
But, heedless of wind or of warning sea,
She hopefully speeds to the Elder-tree
To gather its fruit by the cold moonlight—
For the Harvest-moon is at full to-night.

And, swiftly mustering on every side,
The clouds up-riding come,
Till the sky throughout its concave wide
Is shrouded in their gloom :
And their riven edges alone reveal,
As the moonbeams out through the openings steal
Like mountain streams through crevice and scar,
Where the moon for liberty wages war.

Poor Mina watches the growing war—
“ The Heavens will not forgive!
The very clouds seem leagued to mar
The hope on which I live ! ”
Lo ! the clouds are scattered to left and right
And the Moon appears in her beauty and might,
And her light comes flooding the earth and sea,
And Mina springs up to the Elder-tree ;

When lightning, dazzling, flash on flash,
From heaven is earthward sped,
And bursts the thunder, crash on crash,
Above her cowering head.
Lo ! the Elder-tree from the cliff is rent
And over the ledge to the billows sent ;
And faces grim from the ruins peer out
And greet her with laughter, shout on shout.

The thunder-sounds yet shake the sky,
And vibrates yet the ground,
The echoes yet through the ruins fly
Of laughter all around,

When over the deep come a shriek and wail ;
Lo ! a plunging hull, a fluttering sail—
A ship 'mong the breakers ! Again rings out
A chorus of laughter, shout on shout.

'Tis Mabel's arm that is passed around
 Poor Mina's prostrate form,
And lifts her from the drench'd ground
 Like lily from the storm ;
And 'tis Mabel's finger that guides her eye
To a shallop's sail that goes glancing by,
While the wind through its straining cordage sings
As over the surf to the ship it springs.

'Tis Mabel cries, with consoling voice,
 " The cure, the cure is won !
The atonement made—Wife, wife, rejoice !—
 And by himself alone !"
Now the ship through the breakers threads its way,
It enters the gorge of the sheltered bay,
It rounds the cliffs, it reaches the strand,
And the rudder is held by Ludwig's hand.

The Trolls.

—◆—
“ A running stream they darena cross.”
—◆—

The Trolls dwelt in the interior of certain hills in Scandinavia, sometimes in large communities, and sometimes in single families. They were a peaceful and inoffensive race, loving quiet and seclusion, and holding little intercourse with mankind—at any rate of their own seeking. Like all underground people, they were skilful and expert workers in metal, producing weapons of war and implements of husbandry, in excellence unapproachable by human workmen. Many a northern legend tells of the wonders wrought by these weapons, so desired by men—of swords that could cut asunder bars of steel as if they had been rushes dried in the wind—of ploughs that a child could guide and a house-dog draw, but which could turn a deeper furrow than any plough made by mortal hands, drawn by a yoke of oxen.

But other gifts, more highly prized than even these, were at the disposal of the Trolls; such as

the power to foresee future events, or bodily strength equal to that of many men.

Being a hard-working and industrious people, their garments were of the plainest fashion; but at feasts and rejoicings, such as the great annual festivals on New Year's Eve and Midsummer Eve, nothing could exceed the richness and elegance of their attire, or the grandeur and magnificence of their Banquet-hall, which was nothing less than an entire mountain elevated on countless pillars. Any mortal passing the hillside on these occasions was kindly invited to enter, and hospitably entertained. Numerous are the legends relating this fact, but not one—no, not one, in any language or country, mentions that the guests showed either courtesy or good-breeding towards their hosts: on the contrary, they either ate greedily, or churlishly refused to eat at all; drank deeply, or suspiciously poured the wine out at their feet—and generally ended by running away with the cup!

THE TROLLS.



SWEYN rides from market late to-night —
'T is never too late for Sweyn,
Or whether the moon be at its height,
Or young, or in the wane ;
For Sweyn is a ploughman stout and tall,
And Sweyn has a valiant heart withal,
And oh, of his skill at a bargain vain !
So keen, so shrewd, so cunning is Sweyn !

“ I said and swore the grain was new —
Three years old it must be !—
The miller's a match for most men, too,
But he is'nt a match for me.
'T is he pays carriage and toll to mill,
And I left him to pay the tavern bill :
To cheat a man in a bargain so
Is the very pleasantest thing I know.”

Thus, with his bargain satisfied,
Home leisurely rides Sweyn —
“ Ha, ha ! How I this day have lied
About that load of grain !—”

Rides leifurely home in the moonlight grey,
By height and hollow of moorland way,
And threading the copse-wood dark, until
He comes in front of the Trollden hill.

He halts, he listens — A bufy din
Like a town on market-day —
Crowd preffing on crowd the hill within
He fees from the moorland way ;
For the hill itfelf is uplifted on
Ten thoufand pillars of crimfon ftone,
As the dome of foreft greenery
On its columned ftems upreared we fee.

“ Grand feafting in the hill to-night,
Sweet drinks and difhes rare —
Hey ! how it ftirs one’s appetite
To think but of the fare !
'T is faid that one meal of Trollden food
To a mortal’s ftomach does greater good
Than a twelvemonth’s feeding on beef and wine —
I’ll fee what a fupper will do for mine.”

A gentle touch of heel to flank,
And the good horfe at a bound
Has cleared the brook, from bank to bank,
That fskirts the rifing ground.
Straight up to the open hill rides Sweyn ;
There ftands a Troll who receives the rein ;
Sweyn cafts it to him as careleffly
As if to a groom at a hoftelry.

Saw ever mortal such a fight
As Sweyn now looks upon ?
The Trolden hill within is light
As is its crest at noon ;
For each pillar is wreathed from roof to floor,
And the roof itself is crufted o'er,
With lamps, wherever a lamp may be,
As thick as the blooms on an apple-tree :

And rows of tables ranged between,
That look as look at morn
The meshes of the spider seen
Upon the dewy thorn,
From edge to centre, around and through,
Though all united yet fingle too :
There, elbow to elbow and knee to knee,
Are feated the Trolden company.

And every Troll is richly dressed —
High festival they hold —
With plait and seam of coat and vest
All edged and trimmed with gold ;
While their buxom wives and daughters fair
Have wreaths of flowers in their braided hair,
But every leaf and petal of flower
Is a gem worth a titled lady's dower.

A Troll comes out with welcome kind,
And three leap from their feat
That guest so huge as Sweyn may find
Free space to fit and eat.

His plate with smoking viands is piled—
But Sweyn, though never he bowed or smiled
Or a syllable uttered of thanks or grace,
In a goblet deep has buried his face.

A long loud breath — he then prepares
The heaped-up plate to clear,
And first his elbows both he squares
And draws the table near ;
And then, with face bent over his plate,
Champ, champ, his jaws on each other grate ;
Though hurrying never yet never still,
Like the grinding stones of a barley mill.

And on his left and on his right
A Troll in waiting stands,
Each holding, covered with napkin white,
A fresh dish in his hands ;
And one is standing behind his chair —
To keep the goblet filled his care —
Thinks Sweyn “ He’s a fool at feast that waits ;”
So leisurely drinks while they change the plates.

And still he eats, and eats, and eats,
The stewed, the boiled, the roast ;
But somehow now the varied meats
Have much of their flavour lost !
The action too of his knife grows slow,
The champ of his jaw grows dull and low,
And bits, just such as erewhile he ate,
Are tasted, and left on the edge of his plate.

Again fresh dishes. Again the cup
Bells up with a foamy crown,
But Sweyn looks slowly, fadly up,
And knife and fork lays down —
“ Remove the victual — remove it, I pray,
Or I'll lose what I've eaten so relishingly ;
But I think, I think, perhaps, I might
Drink one cup more — if I stood upright.”

With both hands on the table spread
He rises from his seat,
And slowly bending back his head
He stretches to his feet.
When out of the cup he lifts his face
Of the feast remains no sign nor trace ;
But with foot advanced and wreathed hands
Each Troll by a smiling partner stands.

And music, soft as the softest notes
In deepest woodlands heard
When lightly over the south wind floats
And only their tops are stirred,
Comes wafted up like a long drawn sigh ;
And the Trolls in a mazy dance glide by,
Around the pillars, and in and out,
Whirling and twirling about and about.

When lo ! darts from the eastern sky
A ray of rosy light —
A thousand lamps extinguished lie
And darkly mark its flight !

And the glittering rays on darting come,
Each cutting its lengthened line of gloom,
And the wind-like music at once is laid,
And the clouds of whirling feet are stayed.

As Sweyn goes forth his horse to find
A Troll comes hastening up,
To bid the guest a farewell kind
And give the stirrup-cup ;
For the dawn is breaking bright and fast,
And for every ray that glances past
A thousand lamps are extinguished found
And the pillars an inch are sunk in ground.

Sweyn takes the cup—The Troll has turned
Beneath the hill to look —
A touch — the horse the greenward spurned
And Sweyn is o'er the brook !
And up he reins. “ Now what good,” quoth he,
“ Is a cup like this to a man like me ?
I might sell it, 't is true, and 't is solid gold ;
But how I got it must then be told.

“ Some simple folks the theft might blame,
For that I should not care ;
But then, but then, the Priest would claim
For ‘ Church and Poor ’ a share.
I wish I could something more useful get ;
I'll see if I cannot exchange it yet.”
He beckons the Troll, who stands alone,
For lamps and pillars and all are gone.

Since Jordan's sacred current ran
Beneath the symbolled Rood,
'Crofs running stream no Christian man
By Troll may be pursued ;
At the water's brink so his feet are stayed :
Cries Sweyn, with a laugh, " 'T is too deep to wade,
And a dangerous leap is a running stream ;
Ha, ha ! But would you the cup redeem ? "

The Troll in silence nods his head
And keenly looks at Sweyn,
And Sweyn, ere other word be said,
Looks keenly back again.
" Now what will you give ? 'T is a beautiful thing,
And if fold a mint of money 't would bring ;
Come, something that's useful, that I alone
Might have, and hold, and share with none."

" A fickle I will give, so strong,
Yet light upon the wrist,
'T will pass the standing corn among
Like sunbeam through the mist :
'T will reap more grain in a single day
Than twelve strong men can carry away —"
" And useless except at the harvest be !
No fickle," cries Sweyn, " no fickle for me !"

" A flail then I will give, so light,
Yet powerful on the floor,
You may it wield from morn till night
Nor breathe a breath the more :

'T will thrash more grain in a single day
Than twelve strong men can carry away—"
" A capital thing for Master !" cries Sweyn,
" But little would I by the bargain gain."

 " The strength of twelve men I will give,
 And use it as you may—"
" To last as long as I shall live ?"
 " With life but to decay."
" Twelve men like myself ?" " Even such as you."
" I think, I think, that offer may do."
" 'Tis yours. Now the cup." Sweyn leaps to the
 ground—
" But first I'll prove that the coin is found."

 His arm around the horse is passed
 As if the girth to try—
 Upon his shoulder it is cast,
 Hoofs striking at the sky !
But Sweyn stands steady and motionless,
Without rise of muscle or flush of face,
'Till down on the sward it is set again—
" Now the cup ?" " Yet another trial," cries Sweyn.

 A stone as big as an elbow-chair
 Lies bedded in the sand—
'T is hurled a furlong through the air
 By a jerk of his right hand !
" Now the cup." " One more." He strides up now
And twists from an oak a mighty bough,
And snaps it in twain, as you may have seen
An urchin snapping the stem of a bean !

Quoth Sweyn, "To lift, to throw, to break—
The coin is good and found—
Troll! Now you may your tankard take."
He casts it on the ground,
And, whip and spur, on the road he flees :
But the Troll sits nursing and rubbing his knees,
A grin so intense on his face has he
That his mouth is round where his ears should be.

Now, rising to his feet again,
He skips across the brook
And lifts the cup ; then after Sweyn
He casts one parting look.
"The greedy boor!" he chuckles at length,
"Tis true I have given him twelve men's strength,
But — since he so much in eating delights—
Ho, ho ! *I have given him their appetites !*"

The Still-Man.

—◆—
“ ’Tis better to leave the well alone.”
—◆—

The Still-Folk of Central Germany in many respects resembled the Trolls of Scandinavia, and not least in that love of quiet and stillness from which the former derive their name. Like the Trolls they inhabited the interiors of hills, in which they had their spacious halls, and strong rooms filled with gold, silver, and precious stones. The communications between these and the outer world were through wells and springs, and water-clefts in the rocks. In this respect also they resembled the Trolls, for to this day they shew a well in Norway “ which was the noted haunt of the Trolls, and was said to penetrate to the centre of the earth, and to be the passage through which they emerged to upper air.” Great were the virtues of these wells: not only did they give extraordinary growth and fruitfulness to all trees and shrubs that grew near them, whose roots could drink of their waters, or whose leaves be sprinkled with the dews condensed from their vapours; but

for human beings afflicted with certain maladies, they proved a fovereign remedy.

It was from the vapours of these wells, mingled with beams of the full moon or rays of the rising sun, that they spun the thread, warp and woof, of which they made their *Nebel-Kappe*—(cloud cap) or cap of invisibility.

THE STILL-MAN.



PART I.

'T is Hans the miller, old Hans' heir,
With flour enough in his clothes and hair,
His clothes so plain and his hair so sleek,
To feed the mice of his mill for a week :
With his heavy hand he smooths his brow —
 Sure never looked knave so like a fool !—
As he comes to Grethel, the kind old frau,
 Wife Grethel, who keeps the village school.

“ A peck of meal I bring you here —
 'T is pity good meal should grow so dear !
And this is made from prime new grain
That has barely a year in the rickyard lain.
Just taste—did ever in copse-wood grow
 A nut with kernel half so sweet ?
'T is as soft and as white as the driven snow ;
 What a beautiful thing is good new wheat ! ”

“ ‘ Nothing for nothing to rich or poor,’ —
Hans, heard you ever that saying before ?
If all that the neighbours tell be true,
You know it by word and by practice too :
So, Hans, the matter to me reveal
That brings you here so late to-night ;
What must I *do* for the peck of meal
From that prime new grain, so sweet and white ? ”

“ The neighbours then harshly judge of me,
The peck of meal is a present free :
But—well—Frau Grethel, I fain would hear
Your advice in a matter that stands me near.
So ’t is little I ask, and that indeed
Most folks do willingly give unfought ;
Aye, plenty of that we get in our need,
Because, in footh, it has cost them nought.

“ When Father died—may his soul be blessed,
And his earthly frame in the grave find rest !
For his life was a life of toil and care
And saving and thrift—and I am his heir ;
But with all his saving and all his thrift
He never had plenty or comfort known,
Or to me a thaler or kreutzer left,
Had a secret hand not aided his own.

“ Now listen, Frau Grethel. Our house and mill
Are built at the base of the Wonder-hill,
Within whose bosom, as you know well,
The kind and help-giving Still-folk dwell :

A Still-man marked the endless toil
Of Father and me, our rent to pay —
Our pinching thrift and drudging toil —
And has steadily helped us from that day.

“ The cows he leads to the pastures green
Where hoof but theirs has never been,
By secret paths the crags among,
Where the dew on the herbage lingers long :
And hence the reason why at the mill
The villagers milk and butter will buy,
Why the miller's cows the pail will fill
When every udder save theirs is dry.

“ If a load of grain we want in haste,
When the market price is at its best,
The flail at night by the sheaves we lay,
And the wheat is in sack at break of day :
If ground to flour we want the grain,
We set the sacks by the mill-stones down, —
At break of day it is in the wain,
All ready to start for the market-town.

“ Frau Grethel— 't is seldom that we hear
Of a plum-tree bearing every year,
But our big tree that stands alone
Has never a barren season known :
And why ? Because it grows on the brink,
On the very brink of the Still-man's well,
Where its thirsty roots may ever drink
Of the water that never ran or fell.

“ You should have seen it on Easter E’en,—
All blossom and never a leaflet green !
It covered the ground like a fall of snow,
And sheeted the mouth of the well below !
Or to-day, you should have seen it to-day,
As I saw it at sunset from the mill,
While its fruit-bent boughs on the greenward lay—
Like a purple cloud on the Wonder-hill !

“ And when the fruit is ripe and round,
We place our baskets on the ground,
Between the well and the plum-tree stem,
And at daybreak find the fruit in them :
And so neatly packed is every plum,
And each by other so lightly laid,
That not a mark on the delicate bloom
Have the Still-man’s shadowy fingers made.

“ And by his help which cost us nought,
Far truftier too than labour bought,
More timely given, with greater skill,
We bought at last both farm and mill :
Though Father saw his growing store
He ne’er relaxed his life of care,
But to the last he added more—
And me he left his only heir.


“ Yes, farm and mill and all are mine,
And so far I must not repine ;
But what is farm, or what is mill
To the treasures that lie in the Wonder-hill !

For the Still-folk down in its caverns keep
Their wealth, unmeasured and untold ;
They have pile on pile and heap on heap
Of rubies and diamonds and bars of gold !

“ But flake of gold, or diamond bright,
Or ruby, never has met my sight ;
No, none of these treasures he brings to me,
And his labour seems now but a mockery :
And I dream and I think, and I think and I dream
Of the caverns bright with the wealth they hold ;
Light as the day at noon they seem
With rubies and diamonds and bars of gold.

“ In dreams I feel my hands weighed down
With gems and gold—and all mine own !—
Till my yielding wrists and fingers ache,
With their precious burden like to break.
Ah, Frau, to make these dreams come true !
What course, what plan would you advise ?
For skilled in Fairy lore are you,
In books deep read, in counsel wife.”

“ Hans, Hans, were you with fever ill,
And sought in aid the Doctor's skill,
What hope that it would make you well
Did you but half your ailments tell ?
You now have told what you desire,
Your plan to gain it next reveal ;
For if my counsel you require
From me you nothing should conceal.”

- “ I’ve heard that he who boldly dares
Displace the cap a Still-man wears—
His cap of invifibility,
Of moonlight woven and vapour gray—
May keep the Still-man evermore
In clofe and constant fervitude ;
Or freedom back to him reftore
And claim from him a ransom good.
- “ My plums are ripe : beneath the tree
To-night the baskets placed fhall be,
The Still-man’s brimming fountain nigh,
And down behind them I will lie.”—
The Frau arofe from her feat in hafte,
An angry flufh fuffufed her cheek,
And thrice acrofs the room fhe paced
Ere to the miller fhe could fpeak.
- “ Beware, beware of ingratitude !
Oh how can you talk of fervitude
For one who freely, generously
Has refcued you from poverty ?
How could you dare do fuch a wrong ?
My counfel hear and then begone ;
’Tis only a line from a plain old fong—
‘ *T’is better to leave the well alone !* ’ ”
- 

PART II.

THE baskets beneath the tree are set,
But Hans is lingering near them yet ;
Though his foot is turned towards the mill
His step grows slow and slower still :
He halts at last, but he stands not long,
 Back he comes with a hasty stride
And stretches his length the grass among—
 The dewy grass by the fountain side.

And there in the grass on his back he lies,
His face upturned to the silent skies ;
While the moon looks over him into the well
As if she would of his ambush tell :
And the million stars are gazing down
 Clear-eyed upon him, so far below,
With a mocking smile or an angry frown,—
 And they all his secret purpose know.

He shuts his eyes. There the stars are yet !
Still keenly on him their watch is set :
His palms on his throbbing lids are pressed ;—
And 't is now they seem to see him best !
Then he sits upright. Shall he yet go home ?
 Already much of the night is gone,
And better far he had never come
 Than now to make his presence known.

Again at his length in the grafs he lies,
But he turns his back to the starry skies ;
On his folded hands he refts his brow —
So, fo. He can think in comfort now.
What fhall he do when the cap of mift
Is knocked from the trembling Still-man's head ?
Already he feels him ftuggle and twift,
As away to the mill he is captive led.

And what fhall the Still-man's ranfom be ?
There's nothing fo beautiful to fee
As the ruddy glow of the ruby's flame,—
And yet to the diamond's it is tame,
Though its light be white and icy cold :
Of one or of both then fhall it be ?
Or of long bright bars of yellow gold ?
All beautiful — He will have all three !

The caftle that crowns the hill will be fold
When the Hergrave dies—he is very old :
Pleafantly there 'mong the trees it ftands,
And Hans will buy it and all its lands :
Then the villagers fmiling and bowing will come,—
With a wave of his hand he will fend them back,
Each to his villainous cottage home :
Frau Grethel out of the village fhall pack.

The moon to the weft has paffed away,
The ftars are waxing faint and grey ;
But all along where the uplands dim
Meet the eaftern fky-line, edge to rim,

Is a soft and rofy light besprent ;
And out to the dark ruff waves of flame,
Like bannered heralds out vanward sent
A conqueror's advent to proclaim.

The sun is coming. Hans looks around,
And then fits riveted to the ground :
Like an eastern turban of filk and gold,
Wreath twining with wreath, fold lapping on fold,
Is a mift ascending from the well,
Gracefully swirling from bank to bank—
Wildly he struck, but forward fell,
And under the clofing waters sank.

When Hans the miller opens his eyes
A fcore of yards from the well he lies,
Flat on his back with his limbs outspread,
Like a toad when crushed by a ploughman's tread ;
But how he was fished up from the well,
Or how sent spinning through the air,
Is more than Hans the miller can tell
While choking and coughing and gasping there.

And now, like steam from a giant's cup,
The mift from the well-mouth rifes up ;
Straight as a column of stone it ascends
And never a moment wavers or bends ;
Up, up till it paffes above the tree,
And then it fpreads like a summer cloud—
A shadowy form there Hans can fee,
And its voice comes to him clear and loud.

“ Lo !
I go,
Henceforth I cease to be thy friend,
Although
So low
I may not bend,
As to become thy foe.
Base of heart
And covetous thou art,
And I depart.
In the waters clear
Of the well,
Many a year
Did I dwell,
For nothing of evil came it near :
It has polluted been by thee ;
Now see
Under the spreading tree
The grass is green —
And the well has been.”

The cloud floats slowly over the mill
And settles down on the Wonder-hill ;
And beneath the plum-tree nothing is seen
To mark the spot where the well has been.
Hans thinks as he drags his limbs along,
For his bones are aching every one, —
“ There was truth after all in Frau Grethel’s old song ;
I wish I had left the WELL alone !”

The Hill-Man.

“ The avalanche, the thunderbolt of snow.”

The Hill-men or Dwarfs of Switzerland lived among the inaccessible peaks of the upper Alps, pasturing and tending their flocks—not of sheep or goats, but of wild chamois, a cup of whose milk received from the hands of a Hill-man, its rightful owner, like the widow's cruse of oil, “ failed not.”

Although thus living remote from the dwellings of men, they not unfrequently came to the solitary *chalets* on the lower Alps, bringing to the disconsolate herdsman stray lambs or goats; and on occasions they also descended into the valleys, to give to the inhabitants of the villages timely warning of coming storms, floods, avalanches and landslips: for the Hill-men, from their great knowledge of the conditions and changes of the elements, and from their living in the upper regions of the earth, where all primary elemental changes are wrought, knew the time, the force, the direction and the duration of every storm—could tell where the embryo avalanche

was forming, when it would be dislodged from its giddy ledge, and upon what part of the terrified valley it would be precipitated.

“The natives of the Alps distinguish between several kinds of avalanches. The *staub-lawinen* (dust avalanches) are formed of loose fresh-fallen snow, heaped up by the wind early in the winter, before it has begun to melt or combine together. Such a mass, when it reaches the edge of a cliff or declivity, tumbles from point to point, increasing in quantity as well as in impetus every instant, and spreading itself over a wide extent of surface. It descends with the rapidity of lightning, and has been known to rush down a distance of ten miles from the point whence it was first detached, not only descending one side of a valley, but also ascending the opposite hill, by the velocity acquired in its fall, overwhelming and laying prostrate a whole forest of firs in its descent, and breaking down another forest up the opposite side, so as to lay the heads of the trees up the hill in its ascent.

“Another kind of avalanche, the *grund-lawinen* (ground avalanche) occurs in spring, during the months of April and May, when the sun becomes powerful, and the snow thaws rapidly under its influence. * * * * This species is more dangerous in its effects, from the snow being clammy and adhesive, as well as hard and compact.”

The legend of “The Dwarf seeking lodging” is variously related, and more than one valley in Switzerland can show the tomb of a village, and claims for it the catastrophe of the ballad.

THE HILL-MAN.



For weeks had the snow, and the snow alone,
The snow, the snow, met the aching fight ;
On the slopes and the peaks around it shone,
And the boughs of the trees with snow hung down,
And the house-tops all with snow were white ;
And the sun flung his dazzling glance below
On the freezing, glittering, sparkling snow.

But a sturdy wind leaped up at last
From a mountain gorge where it long had slept ;
And as down through the glens it shouting past
Came the mists and the vapours following fast,
And out and over the vale they swept ;
Like the willing vassals of warrior lord
Who follow his foot and who wait his word.

The trees are stirred and their branches all
Cast their heavy burdens to the ground,
And erect upspring, like men from thrall
When they dash to the earth at Freedom's call
The freezing chains that had them bound ;
And the setting sun disdains to throw
One glance on the soiled and fallen snow.

Now into the hamlet's silent street,
With its clofe shut doors and its miry way,
An aged Dwarf drags his weary feet
Through the melting fnow and plafhing flect;
His elfin locks are thin and grey,
And like wreaths of the fog and vapour fhow
That denfer ever and denfer grow.

And at every door, as he wends his way,
He pauses and utters this fmall request—
“ But a morfel of bread, but a cup of whey,
But a fcattered handful of ftraw or hay
In barn or fhed where my limbs may ref—”
But the only answer to his request
Is rude denial or heartlefs jeft.

Still from door to door, from door to door,
And from fide to fide of the ftreet he goes,
Till each houfe in the hamlet is counted o'er—
But is ever the answer as before,
And ever the door in his face they clofe;
To every houfe he has been but one,
A little cottage that ftands alone.

Alone it ftands at the back of the ftreet,
And feems as if for its poverty fpurned;
It feems as if that its neighbours neat
All difdained to look on this poor retreat,
And rudely on it their backs had turned:
The humble home of an aged pair,
Who fpend the clofe of their days down there.

As soon as they hear the Dwarf's request
The kind old wife to the door goes out,
And bids him enter and share their best,
Though humble their food and their place of rest :
The husband pushes the embers about
And welcomes the Dwarf and praises his dame,
Then kneels on the hearth to blow the flame.

They set before him a loaf of bread—
A barley loaf—'t is their only one ;
Beside it a small round cheese is laid
The dame from her ewe goat's milk has made,
With a cup of the whey to wash it down :
And nearest the fire they place his seat,
And smile with pleasure to see him eat.

Yet little he eats of the good folks' cheer,
And the words he speaks are brief and few,
For often he starts, and seems to hear
An expected sound, and doubt his ear,
And listen, and doubt, and listen anew ;
Then he kneels and presses his ear to the ground —
To his feet he springs, for he knows the sound !

Erect and straight to his feet he springs,
And wondrous lithe and strong he grows !
Up under his arm the wife he brings
And over his shoulder the husband swings,
And into the dark at a stride he goes, —
Cleaving the fog, and skimming the snow,
And leaving the hamlet far below.

Up, up the hill, and no halt makes he
Till the yellow fog is below them seen,
When he looks and listens attentively —
The scared old folks can nothing see,
And fain are they their eyes to screen ;
Only a rushing sound they hear,
That strikes them mute with awe and fear.

They fit by the Dwarf on the moonlit hill,
And ever the rushing sound they hear,
And louder it grows and louder still
Till every sense it seems to fill,
To jar the brain, to deafen the ear,
And the very blood to curdle and chill —
Louder and louder and louder still :

Till the sky above, and the vale beneath,
And every reeling hill around,
And every shifting vapour wreath,
Seem but this one dread sound to breathe, —
To breathe, to be themselves but sound ;
Nothing but deafening, stunning sound,
In the sky, the vale, and the hills around.

But the Dwarf, ah the Dwarf, the sound knows well !
The roar of the Avalanche he can hear !
Woe ! Woe ! It is ringing the hamlet's knell —
Its path of destruction he can tell,
When first it breaks from the Peak of Fear
And bounds away in its dread career,
Till it bursts on the wood-clad mountains near.

The forest crops from the hills are shorn,
As severed by sickle are ears of grain, —
Or up by their rock-fast roots they are torn, —
And on in one mighty swathe they are borne ;
Their stems like a stubble-field remain ;
And leagues of ice, and earth, and snow
Rush down on the hamlet — Woe ! Oh woe !

The mist is upborne like a foaming sea,
Then sinks and settles again in the vale ;
The sound is subsiding mournfully ;
The echoes reply, each separately ;
Now all unite in a long, low wail —
A wail for the hamlet buried and dead,
Where the ghostly mist like a shroud is spread.

“ Dear wife, in vain, in vain do I try
To think how we came this house within — ”
On a bed of fragrant moss they lie
That may with the softest swadown vie,
The coverlet is of white fox-skin ;
And the walls and the roof are of pine-wood green
With heath and ferns laid close between.

Green rushes, fresh gathered, bestrew the floor ;
On a plane-tree table is breakfast set,
And ranged in a row 'tween the bed and the door
Stand three tall chairs made of fycamore,
For the shining bark on the wood is yet.
Now round to the Dwarf they look wonderingly —
“ Good friend, can you tell how this may be ? ”

“ This comes of sipping my wine last night,
Distilled from the rhododendron's bloom ;
I gave you a taste when you swooned with fright,
And lay on the hill in the cold moonlight :—
For you have I built this mountain home ;
I built it over you where you lay,
And the roof was thatched by the dawn of day.

“ And then to the splintered peaks I clomb,
And drew the milk from a young chamois ;
Strange feeds I gathered the crevices from,
That had from orient countries come
In the beaks of birds man never saw,
And that never have looked at him in awe,
But dwell near the sky with the free chamois.

“ To drink of this milk be not afraid,
For fast as you drink the cup will fill ;
This cheefe from a part of it I made,
I bruised the seeds and I baked this bread,
And ever from these you may cut at will ;
For fast as you cut they will grow again,
And whole and fresh while you live remain.

“ When the hunter tired comes here to rest,
Or a homeless wight for charity,
When the traveller lated would be your guest,
Still kindly listen to his request
And shelter him as you sheltered me.
May your days like the flakes from yon snow-cloud be,
As many, and fall as peacefully!”

FAIRIES
OF THE
HEARTH AND HOMESTEADS.

The Pixies.

“ And for the maid who had perform'd each thing,
She in the water-pail bade leave a ring.”

The Pixies seem to have been almost unknown out of Devonshire and Cornwall. They were tiny creatures, not larger than a child's doll, pretty and graceful, and uniformly dressed in green. The Pixy-Monarch held his court on the wold, where he appointed to his subjects their respective duties, such as to punish the intemperate, the selfish, and the slothful; and to assist and reward the abstemious, the self-denying, and the industrious. Many a burly farmer returning from market (when the ale had been good and the talk over bargains entertaining) has stabled his horse in a sand-pit, and himself gone to bed in a furze bush; or after putting his horse in the barn among the unthrashed corn, he himself has got astray in his own paddock, walking round and round it, unable to find the wicket till daylight—all this, he averred, was Pixy-doing.

But the good wife, her daughters and maids, received an equal share of the Pixies' attentions :—

“ They make our maids their fluttery rue
By pinching them both black and blue,
And put a penny in their shoe
The house for cleanly sweeping.”

Again—

“ But if the house be swept,
And from uncleanness kept,
We praise the house and maid—
And surely she is paid ;
For we do use before we go
To drop a tetter in her shoe.”

Thus did they reward industry, and punish sloth and intemperance ; but inasmuch as example is better than precept, they themselves toiled diligently all night at whatever work was necessarily left unfinished at the end of the day ; only requiring that a cup or pail of fresh water should be nightly set apart for their use, in which, that their own services might be quite gratuitous, they frequently left a small silver coin.

A legend somewhat resembling the following is told in Devonshire :—

THE PIXIES.



PART I.

Two sisters dwell in a cottage small,
Where roses hide the trellised wall,
And clematis and jessamine
Around the porch and casements twine ;
From garden path to cottage eaves
Is nothing seen but blooms and leaves,
Sweet blooms the minstrel bee knows well, —
And there two orphan sisters dwell.

The elder, Mary, busily
Was spinning by the break of day,
But Alice lingers still in bed
Although the sun is overhead :
And merrily the wheel goes round
With low, unceasing, whirring sound ;
As if it sent the cheerful bee
An answering song of industry.

“ Rife, Alice, rife, for much have you
Within, without the house to do,
While to the market-town go I
Our thread to sell, your kirtle buy :
Fail not to bring the firewood home,
Be sure to drain the honeycomb,
And lay the fairest apples by
For winter use in cupboard dry.”

The sun had set an hour and more,
And weary were her feet and fore,
For far had been the market-town,
When Mary in her home sat down :
But soon the smile forsook her face,
For everything looked comfortless ;
No tea-board on the table laid,
Unswep the hearth, unbaked the bread.

“ You have not brought the firewood home,
You have not drained the honeycomb,
Nor stored the winter fruit, — I fear
You have been idle, sifter dear.”

“ The Pixies everything will find,
They are, you know, so very kind ;
They will put everything away,
And sifter, now to bed, I pray.”

To bed together — soon to sleep :
Now softly forth the Pixies creep,
With tip-toe step and whisper low
They to their separate duties go —

To bake, to sweep, to sew, to spin—
But ere their labours they begin,
They lightly to the pail draw near
To drink one draught of water clear.

“ Wake, Alice! Alice! Do you hear
Those angry mutterings? I fear —
But no, oh no, you could not fail
To fill the little Pixies’ pail! ”
“ It is as when you went away,
No water have I drawn to-day,
And will not leave my bed, I trow,
To fetch it for the Pixies now.”

No pause, no answer Mary makes,
But quits her bed, the pail she takes,
And hastens from the cottage-door,
Though weary are her feet and fore :
She backward starts, but not with fear,
Reflected in the water clear
She sees sweet faces round her own—
She dips the pail, and they are gone.

She bears it brimming full along—
Is it so light, or she so strong?
Upborne it seems by hands below!
Seems onward of itself to go!
On to the door and in it goes!
The door seems of itself to close! —
Those faces in the water bright
Will bring her pleasant dreams to-night.

PART II.

THE sun with bright and cheerful face
Again begins his daily race,
And chafes from the earth and sky
The shadows that upon them lie ;
And with him, from her humble bed,
The elder sifter lifts her head ;
And light and happiness she brings,
Like him, to all surrounding things.

Straight to the Pixies' pail she goes, —
Sudden her cheek with pleasure glows,
She claps her hands in glad surprize,
And joyfully to Alice cries,
“ Oh come and see this lovely sight,
The silver pennies shimmering white
At bottom of the water clear, —
A score at least. Come, sifter dear ! ”

But Alice tries to rise in vain,
No power do her limbs retain ;
Dismayed, she back reclines a while,
And sighs, and then affects to smile ;
Again she tries, now wild with fear,
And grasps at everything anear,
And screams for help — in vain, in vain,
All powerless her limbs remain !

The day passed on ; the morrow came,
And passed, and left her still the same ;
And weary weeks and months wore by
And saw her lying helplessly :
Were lost to her the summer sky,
The autumn woods of every dye,
The winter's snowy covering,
And flowery pride of verdant spring.

All day her sister sits her near,
Her wants to tend, her plaints to hear ;
And never seems to droop or tire,
Or food to take or rest require ;
And every night the Pixies good
Drive round the wheel with sound subdued,
And leave — in this they never fail —
A silver penny in the pail.

She lies and thinks of former days,
And former thoughts and former ways,
Her sister kind, the Pixies good,
And of her own ingratitude ;
Her time so wasted and misspent,
To selfish ease and pleasure lent —
Sees nought to praise and all to blame,
Till burns her cheek with grief and shame :

And, weeping bitterly, she cries,
As on her sister's breast she lies —
“ Oh, could I leave this loathed bed,
And feel the sunshine on my head !

And oh, to feel the morning air
Blow on my eyes and 'mong my hair!
And oh, for strength to toil for thee,
True friend, as thou haft toiled for me!"

PART III.

ANOTHER dawn ; and now the sun
His varied, circling course has run,
And all the little household shows
As when a year ago he rose.
" Come, Alice, see this lovely sight,
The silver pennies shimmering white
At bottom of the water clear, —
A score at least. Come, Alice dear !"

Forgetful of the past she spoke,
But Alice at her call awoke ;
The bed-clothes from her feet she flings,
And down upon the ground she springs,
And runs to where her sister stands
With wildered looks and clasped hands :
Then full remembrance comes, and there
They bend their trembling knees in prayer.

And long they knelt and wept and prayed,
As if to rise again afraid;
And when at last they rose and stepped,
Still tremblingly they prayed and wept :
First, hand in hand across the floor,
Then to the window, then the door ;
A moment 'gainst the porch they leant,
And out into the garden went.

The freshness of the morning breeze,
That hastened through the leafy trees
Among her flowing hair to play,
Took power and wish to speak away.
'T were hard to tell the happiest,
For both were happy, both were blest ;
The one to feel those joys anew,
The other her delight to view.

Now merrily their wheels go round,
With low, unceasing, whirring sound,
And blithely send the cheerful bee
An answering song of industry ;
And every night the Pixies good
Drive round the wheels with sound subdued,
And never at departing fail
To leave the penny in the pail.

The Brownie.

—◆—
“Soe fares the unthrifty Laird of Linne.”
—◆—

Brownie, the Household-spirit of the Scottish Lowlands and Borders, is one of the most interesting personages in the whole range of the Fairy Creed. Elf, Pixy, Dwarf, Troll—all had some tie of kindred, claimed a connection with some community, owned allegiance to some king or ruler of their own kind; but *Brownie* lived alone among men. He had no chief, save the master of the house to which he attached himself; no kindred, save the master's family; no home, save the master's domain; and to the service of that master his whole time and energies were devoted; but this attachment he only formed for such as loved and practised the kindly virtues of charity and hospitality. By night, he toiled at the work most urgent or profitable on the homestead; by day, he watched that nothing was neglected, injured or wasted by others; and as this labour was to him a labour of love, as his strength

was superhuman and his supervision unceasing, we cannot wonder that prosperity should have marked the place where Brownie made his home. So free were his services, and so disinterested his motives, that the offer of recompense of any kind was always deemed by him a great affront, and was sure to make him forsake the place—and with him went the prosperity that had marked his presence.

In personal appearance Brownie was a little spare man, with wrinkled face and shrewd and expressive features. He had short, curly, brown hair, and the cloak and hood in which he was always seen were of the same colour—hence his name.

THE BROWNIE.

PART I.

THE good old Laird of Linden Hall
Is on his death-bed laid,
To servants old and kinffolk all
His lateft word is faid ;
He liften to their parting tread,
And when they all are gone
He beckons nearer to his bed
His fon, left there alone.

“ Aye, ever faithful, ever true
I’ve proved them, every one —
Be this remembered fill by you,
Dear boy, when I am gone.
And now ftand near me, low and near,
For feebly comes my breath,
And I have much for you to hear
Before I fleep in death.

“ While Scotland’s crown was won and loft
 In many a bloody fight,
The chief whose name we bear and boast
 Struck boldly for the right ;
And never took he hand from glaive
 Until the land was free ;
Then Bruce to him this lairdship gave
 For his fidelity.

“ The battle blade he laid aside,
 The buckler and the spear,
And came to till his acres wide
 And Linden Hall to rear :
He came the wasted fields among
 As comes to them the Spring,
And hearths that had been silent long
 With joy were heard to ring.

“ And laird and tenant, young and old,
 For many a mile had come
To meet and greet the warrior bold,
 And bid him welcome home :
The feast was spread, and song and jest
 Went round till rose the sun ;
Then on his way went every guest —
 Went every guest but one.

“ Still lingered in the empty hall
 One solitary man,
If man might own a form so small,
 And face so spare and wan ;

He sat in sad and thoughtful mood,
In cloak of ruffet brown,
Of fashion old, with cape and hood
That to his waist came down.

“ The Laird looked wondering at his guest,
The guest looked back at him —
Looked wondering at his width of chest,
And length and strength of limb —
Looked wondering at his face that shone
With soft and genial smile,
Like Autumn sunlight falling on
Some stout old Border pile.

“ Then stepped the Laird up to his guest,
And thus unto him said —
‘ At Linden Hall for strangers’ rest
A couch is ever spread ;
One cup at parting — fill it high —
Health and prosperity !
Friend, you are welcome here as I,
And here to stay as free.’

“ The stranger rose, and from his face
The hood he backward flung ;
And, with his lifted hands, a space
The proffered hand he wrung ;
Then reached the wine-cup from the board,
And drained it of the wine —
‘ Mine host, I take you at your word,
Now take you me at mine.

“ ‘ A Brownie is your gueft, good Laird ;
Far journey hath he come,
But in this war-torn land defpaired
To find a fitting home :
For still where welcome are the poor,
And hospitality
Shows table fpread and open door,
There Brownie’s home fhall be.

“ ‘ Where bed is kept for weary head,
And cup for thirfty lip,
And, fweceter yet than cup or bed,
Kind word of fellowfhip ;
Where los or wrong or fuffering
Still meets with fympathy,
And grief its tale may freely bring —
There Brownie’s home fhall be.

“ ‘ And fo at bonnie Linden Hall
May Brownie bide, I ween,
Unheard by all his foot fhall fall,
By all fhall pafs unfeen :
Protecting, guarding goods and gear
From wafte and injury,
At home, a-field, afar, a-near —
Here Brownie’s home fhall be.’

“ They parted thus, they met no more,
But ever from that day
At Linden Hall each object wore
Look of profperity :

The crops were good and garnered well,
The flocks on hill and lea
All throve — the dullest hind could tell
Here Brownie's home must be.

“ Threecore and ten, the promised years,
Were meted to the Laird,
Then he, with many prayers and tears,
Was laid in the kirkyard.
And from his grave in sorrow deep
Departed every one ;
His stricken son did vigil keep
Alone, till rose the sun.

“ Then in the hall a stranger stood,
In cloak of russet brown,
Of fashion old, with cape and hood
That to his waist came down.
The vow was solemnly renewed
Of hospitality,
The cup was drained, as token good
Here Brownie's home should be.

“ And ever thus, from fire to son,
The story has been told ;
And when one Laird's life-leaf is run
Comes Brownie as of old,
The new Laird's hand in faith to take,
The cup of wine to drain,
As pledge of friendship nought shall break
Thenceforth between them twain.”

PART II.

THE good old Laird of Linden Hall
Is in the kirkyard laid,
His servants old and kinfolk all
Long by his grave side stayed,
Of all his kindly ways to tell —
From him none suffered wrong —
Kind ways that they remember well,
And will remember long.

But ere the grave well closed had been
His son had homeward gone —
Was it that he might weep unseen,
That he might mourn alone ?
That he might hide the grief that makes
The strong man like the child,
When chastening Heaven a dear one takes —
Grief passionate and wild ?

What sound the startled ear affails,
More dreadful than the cry
Of spirit bruised, when Reason fails
It in its agony ?
Rude grooms are whistling at the gate,
And boisterous shout and brawl
And laughter loud and fierce debate
Resound through Linden Hall !

As clamorous round their victim meet
Vile birds and beasts of prey,
Are met the gamester and the cheat,
The profligate and gay :
And song and chorus, laugh and jest,
Are heard till morning fun ;
Then to his rest goes every guest —
Goes every guest but one.

Still lingers in the empty hall
One solitary man,
If man may own a form so small,
And face so spare and wan :
He fits in sad and thoughtful mood,
In cloak of ruffet brown,
Of fashion old, with cape and hood
That to his waist come down.

Then stepped the Laird up to his guest ;
No greeting kind gave he,
But thus abruptly him addressed —
“ May you the Brownie be ? ”
And Brownie stood up in his place
Like one from dream that woke,
And drew the hood back from his face,
But never word he spoke.

“ A cup of wine you come to claim,
The pledge of faith from me
That Linden Hall shall keep its name
For hospitality : ”

Then loud he laughed. "Aye, by the rood!
Such hospitality,
As since he first within it stood
Did Brownie never see!

"I have begun," — again he laughed —
"Nor time, ooth, have I lost:
Now, Brownie, let the cup be quaffed
Between you and your host."
He filled it high, he drank it up,
Replenished it anew,
"Drink! Drink!" But from the proffered cup
Back Brownie shrinking drew;

Back, back, the wine cup to elude;
But after, pace for pace,
With gesture rude the Laird pursued
And dashed it in his face.
Short while he stood in mute surprife,
And shook his dripping cloak;
Then lifted up his sad sad eyes,
And to the Laird he spoke.

"As differs from the tempest wild
That devastates the plain,
The gentle breath of spring-tide mild
That fans the tender grain;
As differs from the lightning's flame
The summer's genial ray,
So differs, Laird, this waste, this shame
From hospitality.

“ Farewell. Repent the wrong you do
Your father’s memory,
And I, for his sake, pardon you
The wrong you do to me.
Repent. Your vile companions spurn,
Renounce their vices all ; —
And Brownie shall again return
To bonnie Linden Hall.”



PART III.

Now shines on bonnie Linden Hall
The light of summer morn,
And shrill and high is heard the call
Of merry huntsman’s horn ;
And up responsive springs the hound,
Impatient to be freed,
And chafing, restless, paws the ground
The fleet and fiery steed.

And soon the riders, one and all,
The revellers by night,
Come gaily trooping from the Hall
In hunting garb bedight ;

And gayest garb where all are gay
 Is that the young Laird wears,
 And keenest spur on heel this day
 Is that the young Laird bears.

O'er field or fallow in the chase
 None with the Laird may keep ;
 The freest hand, the swiftest pace,
 The boldest at the leap.
 And thus in revelry the night,
 In reckless sport the day,
 They passed, till Winter's mantle white
 Upon the stubble lay.

Then little for such sports they cared,
 The long nights weary grew,
 So to the city they repaired
 To seek for pleasures new :
 And there the Laird in Fashion's race
 Was ever foremost seen ;
 Still heading all, as in the chase
 Unequaled he had been.

The hunter knows that reckless speed,
 Though it may win the race,
 Will soon exhaust the bravest steed,
 And brief will be the chase :
 But reckless, purposeless, the Laird
 Pursued his mad career,
 Though Ruin full upon him stared,
 Compassionless and near.

He now dismissed the servants old —
Heart fore and fad they went —
Then farms and crops and homesteads fold,
And all on pleasure spent :
Till from him every rood is reft
Of all that lairdship fair,
So nobly won, so freely left,
And he the only heir !

The trees that shelter gave and shade,
The mighty trees are gone —
They had been planted when was laid
The Hall's foundation stone —
The trees are all cut down and fold,
And pitiless may fall
The summer's heat, the winter's cold
On lonely Linden Hall.

Across the bleak and open plain
The wind blows bitterly ;
Unceasingly fall fleet and rain,
And closing is the day :
No fire its ruddy welcome sends
The Hall's deep shadow past,
To yon poor wayfarer who bends
His forehead to the blast.

Alas! Alas! Clofod is the door
To all the homeless known,
And where the ingle blazed before
Is now the cold hearthstone:
And gone are they who freely gave,
And smiled with joy to see
The poor, the friendless come to crave
Their hospitality.

With feeble, trembling limbs he creeps,
And lies down at the gate,
Nor shuns nor heeds the blast that sweeps
Its portals defolate.
The day is clofod—falls darkeft night
Around him like a pall;
And there lies dead at morning light
The Laird of Linden Hall.

He had repented—late, oh late!—
And in his woe had come
To die alone beside the gate
Of his deserted home:
But sadly by one stranger flood,
In cloak of ruffet brown,
Of fashion old, with cape and hood
That to his waift came down.

The Kobold.

—◆—
“ There’s nothing colder than a defolate hearth.”
—◆—

The Kobold of Germany and the Nis of Scandinavia were identical ; it has also been thought that the Brownie of Scotland was the same being, but although in many points they resembled each other, they were not the same.

In Germany, a Kobold was to be found in almost every house ; and in Scandinavia, not only in every house, but in every ship, and even in every church. In a church, he watched the behaviour of the congregation, and punished those who conducted themselves with impropriety ; in a ship, he watched over the safety of the vessel and its crew ; in a house, he aided the host in his trade or calling, whatever it might be, and materially contributed to his welfare and prosperity. In this last respect he performed the same part as Brownie ; but whereas Brownie only resided in houses where charity and hospitality were held in respect, the Kobold took up his residence in any house, irrespective of the virtue or vice of its proprietor ; only, if virtue were

his rule of conduct, the Kobold promoted his prosperity, and guarded the happiness of his household with the utmost care and assiduity; if vice, he lost no opportunity of thwarting and annoying him; and to a spirit of the Kobold's nature and position, it will be seen that these were neither unfrequent nor unimportant. Nor was it of the slightest use to remove to another dwelling. The Kobold went with him, and no change of abode could release him from his tormentor: *that* could only be accomplished in one way—by relinquishing the practices to which the Kobold objected.

It was before Nüremberg that Gustavus Adolphus first experienced defeat, when attempting to break the lines of blockade with which Wallenstein had surrounded him. In the next campaign Wallenstein, following up his old tactics, again tried to blockade Gustavus at Naumburg; but presuming too much on the straitened means and difficult position of his adversary, he ventured to divide his force and despatch a large portion of it to the relief of Cologne, at that time besieged, and otherwise to extend and weaken his position. Then it was that Gustavus advanced to the famous field of Lutzen, and there he fell, covered with wounds—

“ The shout of victory ringing in his ears.”

THE KOBOLD.



COUNT RUPERT of the Rhine it was —
My little ones, draw near,
And of the Fatherland and Faith
A story ye shall hear —

Count Rupert, from the vine-clad hills
Above the winding Rhine,
Was brought a prisoner to the camp
Of haughty Wallenstein.

They led him to a castle near,
And fiercely did they cry
“ A rebel’s death, a traitor’s death
To-morrow thou shalt die !”

They led him through the broken gate,
Across the ruined square —
The trooper’s brand, the spoiler’s hand
Had both been busy there —

They left him bound upon the ground,
In dungeon dark to lie —

“ Not by the sword but by the cord
To-morrow thou shalt die ! ”

“ The name of Traitor do I spurn ;
’T is theirs who would betray
Our right to build our altars up,
Our right at them to pray :

“ Of Rebel ! ’T is my loudest boast,
As ’t is my highest pride ;
A Rebel ’gainst the many wrongs
My country doth abide.

“ To die ! It is the foldier’s meed,
Of life’s rough march the goal—
The hour be blest when to its rest
Departs my weary soul !

“ And recks it nought in cause like mine
How parts my fleeting breath,
If by the cord or by the sword
I pass unto my death.

“ I stood alone at Nüremberg
When I my sword did yield,
When, fighting still, the Royal Swede
Was driven from the field :

“ Death fought I then. I would have slept
Upon that mournful day,
My sword in my embracing hand,
With my comrades where they lay.

“ But recks it nought in cause like mine
The manner of my death,
If to the sword or to the cord
I yield my parting breath.”

’T was midnight, and Count Rupert lay
Upon the dungeon floor —
More peaceful slumber never fell
Upon his lids before —

When, whispering, whispering, like the wind
In fringe of reedy brake
When reeds are fere, said in his ear
A low, sad voice, “ Awake !

“ Awake ! Awake ! ” The full round moon
Looks straight into the place ;
So clear, the grating-bars appear
Close up against her face.

Then questioned he "Who calleth me?
From sleep who calleth me?"
The clear moon shone—the moon alone
Did bear him company.

"How may this be? Who calleth me?"
He looked the dungeon round,
And lo! the shadow of a child,
Traced faintly on the ground.

Between the shadow and the moon
He looked — was nothing more;
No, nothing but the moonlight and
The shadow on the floor.

Again the voice. "Arise! Arise!
I come to set thee free."
Count Rupert questioned, "What art thou
From sleep that calleth me?"

"The Spirit of this hearth and home" —
Was answered with a sigh —
"Of this cold hearth and wasted home
The Guardian was I.

"All cold, cold, cold. All dark and cold.
Its gentle hearts are fled,
And blood of those who stood to guard
Is on its threshold fled."

Replied Count Rupert, "Reck I not
Though life have reached its goal,
The hour be blest when to its rest
Departs my weary soul.

"Oh Nüremberg! Oh Nüremberg,
Where all my comrades lie!
Woe, woe the hour when from the field
The Swede was forced to fly!"

Rejoined the voice, "He stands at bay
And grimly eyes the foe;
From vantage ground they hem him round,
But dare not strike the blow:

"They deem him in the toils, and they
This night their force divide;
One half is marching on the Rhine,
And one doth here abide:

"Their lines are weak and wide—Wilt bear
These tidings to the Swede?"
Count Rupert burst his bonds in twain—
"I follow where you lead!"

The shadow flitted to the wall,
(The moon looked smiling on)
A moment flitted to and fro
Upon the wall of stone,

And disappeared. Stone fell from stone
 Revealing archèd way :
 Count Rupert stoops his stature tall
 To follow as he may,

When in his weapon-hardened hand,
 Slow groping 'long the wall,
 A hand like to a child's is laid,
 So soft it is and small.

And soon a speck of light appears,
 Dim, terminating, far —
 A speck amid the black and breeze
 Of midnight, like a star,

That nears and broadens : fresher yet
 And fresher comes the breeze ;
 To lofty cave the way expands ;
 Beyond, the fields and trees.

A spreading oak, a saddled steed
 That, neighing, rears its head
 And shakes its rattling rein, for well
 It knows Count Rupert's tread.

Once more the voice, "Farewell! Farewell!"
 The hand from his is gone —
 The shadow vanished. By his steed
 Count Rupert stands alone.

With gentle tone, and fondling hand
Carefing neck and mane,
" Captivity we shared," he cried,
" Now we are free again !

" For Fatherland and Faith !" Away !
With moon and stars to guide —
Away, away, o'er plain and pale,
As on the wind they ride

As from his lair the lion springs
The slumbering hounds among,
So on his unsuspecting foes
The bold Gustavus sprung ;

And from the leaguer they were driven
In rout and wild dismay,
And Nüremberg was well avenged
On Lutzen field, that day !

Yet many a year of war had we
Ere peace and liberty,
With interchange of dark defeat
And hopeful victory ;

But no defeat could daunt the hearts
 That Lutzen fight had won,
 No victory such hope inspire
 As Lutzen field had done.

When in its sheath Count Rupert placed
 His well-worn battle blade —
 “ So would I rest in mine own home
 Befide the Rhine,” he said.

He fought his home. A stranger met
 Him at the cloféd door —
 Was not a hand to clasp in his
 That he had clasped of yore !

With aimless step he wandered back
 To scenes of former strife, —
 To scenes of stern eventful deeds
 That thronged his soldier-life —

And to the castle whence erewhile
 He had been freed, he came —
 Its stately gates, its lighted halls
 Scarce knew he for the fame.

Then came its hospitable lord —
 A comrade old I trow !
 (Peace to his war-tired spirit be,
 His march is over now.)

He led him to his daughter fair,
" Now, Irmengarde, be thine
The talk to keep this wanderer here —
Count Rupert of the Rhine."

And she, for that she prized the hand
Could grasp the sword at need,
And heart that for the Fatherland
And Faith could freely bleed —

Though his home was gone, and there was none,
No, none so fair as she
In all the land, yet heart and hand
Did she accept from — me.

Aye, me! Count Rupert of the Rhine!
There Irmengarde you see —
Your mother! Love her, dear ones mine,
For all her love to me.

And this the castle — You shall view
The dungeon where I lay,
The cave that opens to the fields,
The dark and secret way,

Where by the Kobold I was led;
And if you there should see
A little shadow, like your own,
His shadow it may be.

FAIRIES
OF THE
SEAS AND RIVERS.

The Fata Morgana.

“ For feldom have fuch fpirits power
To harm, fave in the evil hour
When guilt we meditate within,
Or harbour unrepented fin.”

Fata Morgana.—There is a grandeur, a myftery and a terror connected with this potent enchantrefs, that diftinguiſhes her from every other perſonage of the Fairy Family. Never was ſhe ſeen by man, and the appearing of her ſpell-created palace, like the upriding thunder-cloud, was at once the herald and the inſtrument of ſtorm and death ; fascinating the imagination of the ſpectator by its beauty, terrifying him by the evidences of its power. Many have ſeen and ſpoken and written of this palace — iflanded on the ocean midway between the Italian and Sicilian ſhores, engirt with garden, and terrace, and tower ; and every ſucceeding ſpectator has thought that it furpaſſed all that had been ſaid or written in its praiſe.

Like all other fairy beings Fata Morgana had no power over any but the wicked ; the mariner whose soul was unstained with guilt, saw in her towers but a beacon to warn him back to the harbour from the coming storm.

It was no small part of the dangers and anxieties of the coral fishers of the Mediterranean, that they were constantly liable to be attacked by the lawless Corsairs that infested those waters—chiefly from the Barbary States.

THE FATA MORGANA.



'T WAS off the coast of Barbary —
How fast the time away has flown !
It seems as if but yesterday,
And fifty years are past and gone !

'T was off the coast of Barbary —
My tale, I trow, is like our boat,
A laggard getting under weigh
When from this blue lagoon to float,

But once upon the open sea,
The free breeze piping in her sail,
She skims the waters merrily —
So, messmates, ye will find my tale.

'T was off that cheerless coast we lay ;
The Captain cried, " Our toils are o'er,
And we shall see ere close of day
The purple headlands of our shore.

“ And then for Home and its delights,
And eyes that for our coming weep :
Who now recks of the days and nights
That we have spent upon the deep ? ”

Aye, chilly nights and scorching days
A-many had we watched and toiled,
Yet to Madonna gave we praise
For she had on our labour smiled :

Long coral branches straight and fine,
Of purest grain and rarest hue —
Each branch a fortune — through the brine
Up daily on our nets we drew.

The looked-for day had dawned at last
Upon our latest night of toil,
And we had made our latest cast,
And from the nets had ta'en the spoil ;

And cheerily the Captain hailed,
“ Up with the anchor to the peak ! — ”
What sound his startled ear assailed,
And blanched his quivering lip and cheek ?

The measured clank and sweep of oar,
A boat with many a turbaned head, —
Right on and down on us it bore,
And soon the deadly volley sped

Thick, thick among our helpless crew :
A crash, as bow to gunwale came ;
Then flashing blades, that darting flew
Among the smoke like tongues of flame :

And shriek and shout and oath and prayer
And groan and stamp and heavy fall
Arose commingling in the air,
And then—and then 't was silence all.

Two fiery eyes upon me glared,
A bloody hand was round my throat ;
A pause, a laugh, and I was spared,
And rudely cast into their boat.

Was it for pity of my youth,
A helpless child, that I was spared ?
My terror, did it move to ruth
The cruel eyes that on me glared ?

'T was gain ! Aye, mates, I might be sold ;
For that alone they did me save :
Free market there, with ready gold —
A comely boy, a proper slave,

A thing of traffic — I was flung
By the rude hand that griped my throat
Our hard won coral store among,
And then they sank our plundered boat.

Back to their ship again they swept,
That darkly in the offing lay
And on the billows rose and dipped
And hovered like a bird of prey.

The boat was hoisted to her deck ;
Before the wind she bore away —
A wavering line, a hazy speck,
Became the coast of Barbary.

The wealthy merchant-ship at sea,
The humble trader 'long the shore,
In vain did from the Corsair flee,
In vain his mercy did implore :

And villa fair and cottage small,
On isle or mainland where we came,
Defended or defenceless, all
Were given to the wasting flame. —

Mates, be those tales of fear untold,
Unfit are they for peaceful men ;
They make my blood e'en now run cold,
And fifty years are gone since then !

We passed Lipari's funny isles,
We passed our fair Sicilian shore
That ever basks in Nature's smiles,
And down Messina's straits we wore —

A hail came from the vessel's prow,
 Shrill from the poop an answer passed,
From cabin and from deck below
 The eager crew came crowding fast ;

And lo, the cause ! A league ahead
 An island lay, a wondrous scene,
Where cedar and where cypress spread
 Their boughs of many shaded green ;

And on the island, pure and white
 As summer cloud in summer sky,
When, colourless, broad flecks of light
 Upon its lofty turrets lie,

A palace ; and we soon could see
 Its many pillared porticoes,
That terrace bore and balcony
 Beneath the shining window-rows ;

And marble stairs in lengthy flights
 That swept down to the waters blue,
O'ertrailed with gaudy parasites
 And starry blooms of every hue ;

And vase and statue, group and row,
 Stood half concealed 'mong leaves and flowers ;
And coral fountains white as snow
 Flung high in air their rainbow showers.

A space the crew in silence gazed,
Entranced by the fairy scene,
Then shout on shout of joy they raised,
With muttered oath and threat between ;

And forth their gleaming blades they drew —
Sail upon sail aloft they spread,
And fevering the waters blue
On to the isle the Corfair sped.

(Morgana's fairy palace towers, —
I knew them well ! I knew them well !
Her gardens green, her halls and bowers,
Upreared by many a potent spell.)

On rushed the ship, and left and right
Behind her shore and billows flew :
Down went the sun, and black as night
The flying shore and billows grew :

And hot as when through cloud of death
Mount Etna shoots its sulphurous flame,
Or blows the dread Sirocco's breath,
The loud and rushing wind became.

And marble terrace, stair and tower
And portico and balcony,
Were blent and changed by magic power
To clouds as black as ebony :

And shrub and tree of every shade,
And bloom and flower of every hue,
And trellised bower and arching glade,
To lurid thunder vapour grew.

On ruffled the ship : from every cloud
A quivering tongue of lightning flashed,
And, hissing, traced each stay and shroud,
While all around the thunder crashed :

Trembling in every spar and plank
The ship upon her side was cast :
The deep upheaved and yawned : the sank,
And over her the waters passed.

My tale is told. Mates — ship or crew
Was never seen or heard of more!
How I was saved I never knew,
At dawn I lay upon the shore,

Alone, beside the peaceful sea :
But, Mates and Comrades, this I know,
Though wrong may long triumphant be,
And crime may long unpunished go,

That God is watching over all,
And late or soon will come the time
When dark His frown on wrong shall fall,
And stern His punishment on crime :

And this, that what doth fairest seem
 May ruin and destruction bring ;
That what a paradife we deem
 May be the tempest's folded wing :

And this beside ; though it unfold
 Its wing above us, black and near,
Though Ocean o'er our heads be rolled,
 The innocent have nought to fear.

The Rufalki.

—♦—
“To the fairies of the lake fresh garlands for to bear.”
—♦—

Rufalki, the lovely river nymph of Southern Ruffia, seems to have been endowed with the beauty of person and the gentler characteristics of the Mermaids of Northern nations. Shy and benevolent, she lived on the small alluvial islands that stud the mighty rivers which drain this extensive and thinly peopled country, or in the detached coppices that fringe their banks, in bowers woven of flowering reeds and green willow-boughs; her pastime and occupation being to aid in secret the poor fishermen in their laborious and precarious calling. Little is known of these beautiful creatures—as if the mystery and secrecy which is inculcated and enforced in all affairs of government in this country had been extended to its fairy faith. Even Mr. Keightley, so learned in fairy lore, knows little of *Rufalki*, and dismisses her with the following brief notice:—

“They are of a beautiful form, with long green hair; they swim and balance themselves on the branches of trees, bathe in lakes and rivers, play on the surface of the water, and wring their locks on the green meads at the water’s-edge. It is chiefly at Whitsuntide that they appear; and the people then, fingering and dancing, weave garlands for them, which they cast into the stream.”

THE RUSALKI.



'Twas when we dwelt by the Volga's side —
Ah, bless the willows that high and wide
Above its waters grew !
I then had counted but twenty years,
And Niga, my child—your mother, my dears—
Had counted barely two.

A pleasant place was my husband's mill,
With its merry hopper that never was still,
Clacking the livelong day ;
The stream went rushing and flashing past,
Till up by the wheel it was caught and cast
In foam and bells and spray.

A bowshot from the mill or more,
And midway between shore and shore,
A little island lay ;
And swift and deep and dark was the tide
That around it swept on either side,
Beneath the willows gray.

Such trees they were for size and strength !
A very tree in girth and length
Was every reaching bough ;
For countless years on that shady isle
Their roots had fed in the fertile soil,
Untouched by spade or plough.

And on this isle with willows grown,
A good Rufalki, it was known,
Had twined her secret bower ;
But mortal there was none so rude
As pry upon her solitude,
And brave her spirit-power.

But often in the lonely night
The fishermen have seen her light
Shine deep within the stream ;
It shone as does an early star
Ere yet its sisters wakened are,
With faint and wavering gleam :

And then their nets and lines they drew,
And joy was theirs, and back they threw
Them in the stream again ;
And she drove to them the scaly flocks
From hollow banks and pools and rocks,
Like sheep to fold or pen.

And this was why, from year to year,
The neighbours all from far and near,
At pleasant Whitfuntide,

Child and mother and old grand-dame,
With offerings for Rufalki came
Down to the river fide.

And fo, with flowers of every hue,
In dale or dell or copse that grew,
One Whitfuntide they came,
As custom was in the days gone by —
And 't is pity to let old customs die
That have a kindly aim.

Sweet fcented blooms and fprigs of may
We twined and tied that merry day
In chaplet and in wreath,
Which in the fream the children caft,
And, finging, watched them floating paft
The arching boughs beneath.

When fudden, backward from the fream
They running came with shout and fcream,
And to the fream ran I,
And into it I would have fprung,
But twenty arms were round me flung
As wildly I rufhed by.

Away upon the rapid wave
My child was fwept, and none to fave,
Far, farther from the land ;
Swift, fwifter fhe was fwept away,—
But fearlefs ftill and calm fhe lay,
A garland in her hand.

On, on beneath the willows gray —
Oh, never till my dying day
 Shall I forget the fight !
But then, while disappeared my child,
E'en then was changed my terror wild
 To madness of delight.

A female form, — so dreamlike fair,
With neck and arms and bosom bare
 And white as lily flower,
All from the waist down garmented
In vapour, of the colours shed
 By sunlight through a shower ! —

Emerging from the foliage,
Just paused upon the island's ledge
 Above the dewy grass,
Then passed the drooping boughs among
To where my child was swept along,
 As summer-cloud might pass.

She raised, she bore her safe to land,
She took the garland from her hand —
 Oh, more than gems or gold
Your mother, dears, has treasured it !
For 'mong her dripping curls 't was set,
 And — now my tale is told.

The Merman.

“ Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.”

Mermen and Mermaids did not, as their names would imply, live *in* the sea, but *under* it, and chiefly under that portion of the northern waters which embraces the islands and shores of Scotland and Scandinavia. There is, however, scarcely a sea or shore in Europe where they have not been seen: for the Havmand and Havfrue (sea-man and sea-maid) of Scandinavia, the Sea Trow or Troll of Shetland, the Merrow (sea-maid) of Ireland, the Morgan (sea-woman) and Morverc'h (sea-daughter) of Brittany, and the Nix of Germany who dwells in caverns at the bottoms of lakes and rivers, were in reality the same beings.

To enable them to traverse the deep in their visits to the upper world, they made use of the skin of the seal, sometimes to cover the whole body, but more frequently only from the feet to the waist, which gave rise to the vulgar idea of their being half fish, half man or maiden. If on these visits

they were so unfortunate as to lose this skin, they were unable to return to their submarine abodes.

Mermen are uniformly represented as of an amiable and generous disposition; Mermaids, as more uncertain; on some occasions showing great gentleness, on others, great severity:—at one time tracking from sea to sea the ship of the faithless lover, and on his first appearing within arm's reach of the water dragging him beneath the surface,—at another, directing a forrowing youth where to find medicinal herbs that would cure the malady of which his sweet-heart was dying.

It was a good omen, prognosticating fine weather, when, seated on the rocks or sands of the sea-shore, Mermaids were seen combing and dressing their hair; but when, harp in hand, they were seen dancing on the surface of the waters, then woe to the mariner, for storm and tempest were at hand!

If a Merman received any bodily injury from a mortal, the wound could only be healed by the touch of the hand which gave the hurt—and then it healed instantly.

A legend pertaining to the South of France, and another to the North of Scotland, in many points resemble the following:—

THE · M E R M A N .



WITHIN a little sheltered bay
Of wave-indented Copensay,
By cliffs encompassed, high and bare,
Is moored the bark of young St. Clair :
Reflected on the glassy tide
Is every moulding on her side ;
And mast and yard and block and brace
 And shroud and stay and halyard fine,
Each separate object you may trace,
Proportionate and in its place,
 From pennon down to water-line.

The cliffs fling from their faces bare,
With added heat, the ocean's glare ;
 No thing is seen to move ;
The knot-grafs at the water's edge,
The moon-wort on the ragged ledge
 Of splintered crag above,

Each in the sunlight droops its head,
Still is each leaf and pendant blade,
 Although if air or sea
Their faintest note of music played,
Or lightest stir or movement made,
 They dancing all would be.

And listlessly along the deck
 Is many a brawny figure laid,
With slackened belt and open neck,
 And drowsy eye that seeks the shade
 Of many coloured tartan plaid.
Across the boom is stretched a sail,
Passing o'er lea and weather rail ;
A harper old is seated there,
And there the Chieftain, young St. Clair.

Oft with his bark and clansmen brave
He launches on the Pentland wave,
Where many a rock in ambush lies,
And many a gulph and whirlpool tries
To draw within its vortex dark
The reckless or unwary bark :
From Strona to North Ronaldsay
There's not an inlet, creek or bay
 Where boat may moor or ride,
There's not a shifting bank or bar —
And many in these waters are ! —
 Or treacherous pool or tide,
But each the Chieftain knows full well,
And can its depth and danger tell.

He turns and to the harper says —
“ Allan, your harp is dumb;
Have you no tale of other days
To wile the lingering time away,
Until a breeze shall come
To waft us back to Duncan’s Bay ?”
The harper rises at the words,
And tunes and tries the trembling chords;
While, rousing at the magic sound,
The crew in silence gather round.

THE HARPER’S SONG.

Across the deep I only see
A lengthened line of barren shore —
It was not thus you looked, Deernes,
Not thus you looked in days of yore !*

No spot on green Pomona’s isle
So sheltered or so green as you ;
Where we but see the heather now
The giant oak and linden grew.

And where the coot and mallard scream
The red-deer bounded in the glade ;
For there a mighty forest stood
And spread around its solemn shade.

* There is a tradition that the district of Deernes in the island of Pomona was once covered by a splendid forest, abounding with deer; and that in one night it was submerged and laid waste by an inundation of the sea.

Short way beyond the sloping beach —
The forest rising dark behind —
A little smiling village lay,
Protected thus from wave and wind.

And other dwelling was there none
On all that portion of the isle ;
From frith to frith, from sea to found,
’T was forest all for many a mile.

To spread the net, to lay the line,
When tide is smooth and wind is low ;
To throw the hunter’s ashen spear,
To draw the string of hunter’s bow,

And carry home the slaughtered game
Is easy task for man, I trow ;
The dwellers in the Isle of Deer
Did never harsher labour know.

And when the summer evening breeze
Came rippling o’er the shining main,
Making its ruffled surface show
Like burnished armour, scale and chain ;

Then feats were set by porch and door,
Where white-haired fires and mothers fate ;
While their success by land or wave
The ruddy sportsmen would relate :

And youths and laughing maidens came
To dance upon the yellow sand,
And children mimicked noisily
Their measure higher up the strand.

And out upon the sun-lit deep,
Or seated on the wave-lapped rocks,
The Mermaids played on golden harps
And wreathed their long and floating locks :

And well the trusting islefolks knew
The Ocean-Maidens' lovely form ;
Who guarded well their green Deernes,
By day and night, from flood and storm.

A stranger would have said — what they
Believed the Mermaids' locks to be,
Was but the flood of golden light
The setting sun streams o'er the sea :

A stranger would have said — what they
As snowy arm and bosom viewed,
Was but the foam of breaking wave
When by the moveless rocks withstood :

That sound they deemed the Mermaids' song,
And tone of harp with golden strings,
Was but the murmur of the deep
The rising breeze of evening brings :

But well the trusting islesmen knew
The Ocean-Maidens' lovely form,
Who guarded well their green Deernefs,
By day and night, from flood and storm.

What swarthy hull bears for the shore?
In lone Deernefs what may she seek?
With cloud of sail from deck to truck,
And blood-red banner at her peak.

And who are they that trim the sails?
And he that steers the ship to land?
From fash and belt gleams dagger-hilt,
To every waift is girt a brand.

Ah, little thinks the cooing dove,
Folding her younglings to her breast,
That by her very notes of love
She guides the falcon to her nest:

As little think the islanders
While dancing out the summer day,
They guiding are a pirate band
Where they may find an easy prey!

Is it the Borealis' light
That flares across the midnight skies?
The flames that fleck the skies to-night
From burning roofs and rafters rise.

At e'en the laugh and fong rang clear
Far over wood and over main ;
Now farther, clearer, penetrates
The shriek of terror and of pain.

Help for the helpless, help and save !
The helpless all in death are still ;
But on sea or land that pirate band
No other drop of blood shall spill.

No dancing now upon the shore ;
But there is dancing on the sea !
Hand linked in hand, the Mermaids white
Dance on the waters merrily :

And every wave touched by their feet
Leaps wildly, madly, to the land,
With flashing front and hissing voice,
Up, up, upon the blood-stained strand :

Their harps ring out :—the winds, the winds
Rush fiercely on with shout and roar ;
Lifting the waters as they go,
To dash them high upon the shore :

Their voices swell :— the ocean-tide
Up from its lowest depths is torn,
And to the blood-polluted shore
Swift, dark, and overwhelming borne :

From frith to frith, from fea to found,
Unbroken swept the ocean wave,
And every living thing that night
Was buried in a watery grave :

And not a tree was left to show
The forest crown Pomona wore.—
It was not thus you looked, Deernes,
Not thus you looked in days of yore !



Although the harper's song is o'er,
Still does the theme his soul possess ;
And still he eyes the distant shore,
And still he murmurs as before—
“ It was not thus you looked, Deernes,
Not thus you looked in days of yore ! ”
And still the crew around him stand,
For yet they seem to hear
The Mermaids' harps and chorus grand
Come knelling on the ear.

“ Unmoor, unmoor ! Up anchor, ho !
Men, to the fails like lightning go !
Give, give them to the wind !
I felt the breeze upon my cheek,
But never thought me once to speak —
We leave the shore behind.
Allan, I heard the ruffled tide
Lap, lapping on the vessel's side,

But, like a dreaming man
Who what he really hears confounds
With what are but imagined sounds,
My charm'd spirit ran
With the indignant ocean-wave,
Strong to avenge if not to save,
That swept Deernefs from shore to shore —
Deernefs, so changed since days of yore.

“ Set every fitch of canvas free !
Square every yard, each sheet belay !
Right on before the wind go we ;
This night we ride in Duncan's Bay ! ”
Over the seething waves they go,
Sail upon fail they press,
Till close beneath the rushing prow
Lies lonely Rofenefs.

Right for the Skerry isles they fly —
Rocks that have shivered many a keel—
Where in the sunlight loves to lie
The shy and solitary seal ;
So near they pass the shelving rock
The sturdy clansmen breathless stand,
It seems as they could leap to land :
St. Clair, their anxious fears to mock,
And vain of his address and skill,
Smiles lightly and steers closer still ;
Then in his right hand lifts a spear,
Nor quits the rudder with his left,
'T is poised a moment by his ear,
And in another it has cleft

The shoulder of a giant seal —
Along the rocks they saw it reel,
And then beneath the waves it passed,
The spear still in its shoulder fast.

As when the seagull swift and strong,
Skimming the ruffled deep along
And of the fowler recking not,
Feels in its heart the deadly shot,
Its wings drop to its stricken side,
And it lies helpless on the tide :
So in her course the bark was stayed —
 Hushed in an instant was the gale,
 Collapsed and loose fell every sail —
One staggering, headlong plunge she made,
Then broadside to her course was laid.

St. Clair and his astonished crew
 Look to the isle with wondering eyes ;
There, waft-high from the waters blue,
 They see a Merman slowly rise :
His hand he lifts, and straight the bark, —
 Obedient as a well-trained hound,
Whose earnest eyes are fixed to mark
 The slightest gesture, sign or sound
That may its master's will express,
For praise, reproof, or for cares, —
 Comes gliding swiftly to the strand,
 Until the Merman drops his hand,
And then she pauses, motionless.

His shining eyes have the cold keen blue
 Of the Northern seas where the Mermen dwell,

And his skin has the delicate pinky hue
Of the lining smooth of the twisted shell :
Back from his forehead high and wide,
And midway parted, side and side,
Down, like a mantle, falls his hair
Over his breast and shoulders bare,
Out to the foam on either hand,
And green as the lime-grass on the sand.
But foam or hair may not conceal
From the old harper's eye,
The coiled-up tail and fin of seal
That under the waters lie.

He cries with a voice like the angry surge
When its limitless freedom it would urge —
“ Life for life I demand !
Into the sea, into the sea
Let the guilty be cast to me,
Or never more on land
Shall foot be fet that treads your deck,
And your gaudy bark shall float a wreck,
Before yon sun be wholly fet
Whose lower rim in the wave is wet.
Up, Winds, at my command !
Life for life I demand ! ”

The winds, the winds
Rage round the vessel furiously,
Deep, hoarse, and shrill, like the mingled cry
Of the savage pack, that suddenly
Before it finds

The stag it has hunted all the day,
On the shelterless moorland brought to bay.
Eager to rend and to tear
They rush around,
But motionless yet the air
In the ship is found.

Across the deck old Allan stepped,
And up on the bulwarks he sprang ;
Nimble as ever in youth he leaped,
And his voice full-toned out rang —
“ Life for life you shall have !
Our youthful Chieftain, thoughtlessly,
Has done a deed of cruelty —
For his sin let me atone !
Shall I plunge in the wave ?
Life for life you demand —
Life for life you shall have —
Many for one.
Lo, behind me stand
Twenty of his clansmen brave !
Choose from among us, choose one or all,
For instant death or lasting thrall.”

Around the harper the clansmen crowd,
Clinging to stay and climbing up shroud,
Outstretching their hands and calling aloud ;
Each eager to gain the Merman's eye
That he for his Chieftain beloved may die.

“ On deck, on deck, down every man !
Am I your Chief, ye of my clan ? ”

Each to his place goes silently.
 “ Clansmen, ye are to blame :
A wrongful deed I did, and ye,
To shield me from its penalty,
 Would add to it but shame :
No, if I err, at least I dare
Mine error's punishment to bear.”
His dirk upon the deck he threw,
 From shoulder-brooch his plaid unbound,
His bonnet on his brow he drew,
 And cast one kindly glance around,
Then bounded over the vessel's side
And sank at once in the gaping tide.

Down, down he strongly cleaves his way —
Strike arm and limb instinctively —
Down, down until the breath up-pent
 Seems like to rend his breast in twain,
And all his blood is rushing sent
 Into his eyes and o'er his brain ;
Relaxes now each straining nerve,
And he begins to rock and swerve
 As in a pool sways leaf or reed ;
And now he feels himself propelled
 By other hands with dolphin speed ;
Close to his side his arms are held
 That nothing may his course impede :
The cloven, rushing deep he hears
Like thunder booming in his ears,
And then it melts to soothing strain
 That passes far and far away,

And seems it that his swooning brain
 Upon its undulations lay,
That smaller grow, and less, and less, —
And he sinks into unconscioufness.

Down, down beneath the Pentland tide,
Where the roots of the Skerry Islands hide
The path to the caves where the Mermen bide :
 He is borne through the secret gate :
His heavy lids he opens wide —
 Again to close them he is fain,
Encountering his on every side
 Are eyes that glance with fierce disdain,
 Or darkly on him scowl in hate,
Or coldly from him turn in scorn ;
But onward, onward he is borne,
 And he must lift his lids again.

He looks — what tongue may tell the sight ? —
 On either hand run row on row
Of columns tall of marble white,
On floor of alabaster bright
 And glittering like frosted snow,
Bearing a roof of paly green,
Like sea at early morning seen,
Of shining spars and crystals sheen.
Clasped in a Merman's arms he lies,
Who 'long this mighty gallery flies,
Swift as a star shoots down the skies ;
Into a cave so vast, so wide,
He may not see its farther side,

Only the roof, above them bent
As o'er the earth the firmament.

- High in the midst a palace fair
Upreats its turrets quaint and rare,
Its flanking towers and centre dome
Of marble white as ocean foam :
The countless crowds its courts that throng
 Before them open as they near,
And ever, as they shoot along,
 Close in again upon their rear.

Through spacious corridor and hall—
Echoes no sound from floor or wall,
For the Merman's flying footsteps fall
 As falls on grass the evening dew —
And into a chamber wide and high,
And up to a couch whose canopy
Is curtained with golden drapery
 And starred with gems of every hue.
 St. Clair, St. Clair, ah, now you rue
 That ever that cruel spear you threw !
There lies it now before his face,
 In a Merman's shoulder buried deep —
A Chief or King by mien and grace,
 And by his fortitude to keep
 His pain from eyes that round him weep

At a signal, earnestly expressed,
St. Clair bends o'er the Merman's breast ;

Near to the wound he grasps the spear,
And slowly, steadily, carefully,
He draws until the barbs appear ;
A moment, and the blade is free ;
He casts the gory spear on the ground,
Puts the lifted flesh again in the wound —
It heals 'neath his touch, and no cicatrice
Is left on the skin to mark its place !

The Merman rose up from the bed
And to the Chieftain sternly said :
“ To mock the fears of your faithful crew,
Fears that they felt alone for you,
By dangerous rocks you steered your way,
Putting all their lives in jeopardy :
A helpless creature you came near,
Offending none it did not fear
Even when it saw your lifted spear ;
This confidence, with noble mind,
This helplessness, with nature kind,
Its surest safeguard would have been :—
Chief, was your action great or mean ?
You did not hesitate to bring
This helpless thing to painful end,
Or to protracted suffering
Should Heaven its weary life extend :—
Was it a mean or noble act ?
For this your life I did exact,
And you have borne the pangs of death
When parts in Ocean mortal breath :
But as you nobly honour prized,
And as you nobly death despised,

And freely plunged into the wave
Your faithful followers to save,
And, nobly still, the wrong confessed
Your hasty hand had done,
And readily that wrong redressed,
Your life you back have won.
Bring wine !” ’Tis brought. The Chieftain drinks,
And instantly in sleep he sinks —
Sinks on the couch by which he stands,
Even with the goblet in his hands.

The Chieftain looks around again,
Breathes freely without flush or pain —
How cool, how sweet the air !
And what is this he fondly eyes
That spread on his neck and bosom lies ?
’Tis the harper’s silver hair !
He lies fobbing aloud with excess of joy,
As when yielding to grief fobs a maid or boy,
And nothing his tears can stay :
The cable runs rattling down the side,
The bark swings round to the rushing tide,
And they ride in Duncan’s Bay.

The Neck.

—◆—
“ He heard that strain so wildly sweet.”
—◆—

The Neck was a river spirit of Scandinavia. His dwelling was under the shelving banks of rivers, or in pools washed up by eddies near the fords. Sometimes he was seen as a pretty little boy, with golden hair surmounted by a little red cap; at others, and more frequently, as an old man with long beard flowing down to his waist. He was a great musician, and from this fact it would appear that he was not unknown in the Isle of Man.

“ A gentleman was about to pass over Douglas Bridge, but the tide being high he was obliged to take the river, having an excellent horse under him and one accustomed to swim. As he was in the middle of it, he heard, or imagined he heard, the finest symphony, I will not say in the world, for nothing human ever came up to it. The horse was no less sensible of the harmony than himself, and kept an immovable posture all the while it lasted.”

Even the fabled power of Orpheus did not exceed, if indeed it equalled, that of the Neck. The giant Norway pines waved their mighty arms and nodded

their lofty heads, keeping time to the cadences of his harp-strain ; while the running streams stood still and the cataracts hung suspended in air to listen to it. And more than all, mortals who knew that he was luring them to their doom had not the power to resist, but were drawn from bank to ford, from ford to pool, by the tones of his harp as if by chains of steel. But it was only over the faithless and inconstant that he could exercise this power ; to lovers who held sacred their plighted vows his music gave only delight.

THE NECK.



Alas for the hour Sir Eric came
To Nina's lowly bower !
A-riding his dappled grey he came —
Alas for the woeful hour !

He came from tracking the forest deer,
In the gladfome spring-tide of the year ;
His doublet of green all flashed with gold,
His cap of green on his brow so bold,
'Mong his clustering curls of yellow hair,
Bedecked with feather for forest wear —
He came to Nina's bower.

Fair Nina sat in her peaceful bower
When riding by came he ;
A-singing, singing she sat in her bower,
Like wood-lark, merrily.
“ Now where may this bird of beauty be ? ”
He lowly louted at Nina's knee,
He humbled to her his brow so bold,
And softly singing his tale he told ;
He vowed he ever would faithful prove,
And Nina lifted his tale of love
Trustfully, pridefully.

How sweet it was to think of his love
As she sat in her bower alone!
To sit in her bower and think of his love
When a-hunting he was gone!
It was little he hunted when love was new,
And swiftly back to her bower he flew,
But ere ever a leaf had changed its hue
Aweary of Nina's bower he grew;
Slow was his coming, and short his stay,
And speedy his riding away, away:
She wept alone, alone.

When the dreary trees of the winter wood
Their hueless leaves had shed,
When the hueless leaves of the winter wood
Upon the ground lay dead —
For the sun came flow, and short was his stay,
And speedy his passing away, away,
And they languished beneath his cheerless ray,
And faded, and fell to be trod to clay —
Fair Nina had languished, pale as they,
And faded, and fallen, and coldly lay
Within her bower, dead.

“ Scatter flowers wet with tears
On her bier, on her bier,
Flowers wet with maiden's tears,
Ye who loved her dear —”

Now who comes riding with brow so bold,
In hunting garb of green and gold,
His cap set light 'mong his curling hair,
Bedecked with feather for forest wear?
Sir Eric comes riding his dappled grey,
Cantering gaily down the way
They bear dead Nina's bier.

Like doves when hangs the falcon near
The maidens shrink away,
When the pitiless falcon hovers near
To stoop upon his prey;
And Nina's mother with cry of fear
Runs closer to guard her darling's bier;
And her father old lifts his hands on high
To curse the false lover a-riding by,
But tears gush over his withered cheek,
His quivering lip no word will speak —
They lead him mute away.

But out in the path with an angry cry
Her little brother springs,
With a flashing eye and an angry cry
Unto the rein he clings;

“ False lover that didst our Nina slay —”
Sir Eric goes cantering down the way,
Across the meadow so green and wide,
And along the path by the river side;
On to the ford where the thirsty deer
Come duly to drink of the water clear,
And the swan to rest her wings.

What sound comes up from the river side,
Where drink the timid deer;
'Cross the meadow wide from the river side,
Over the forest drear?
'Tis the tones of a harp, as wild and sweet
As ever a dreaming ear did greet:
Ah, woe to the breaker of plighted vow
If weetlefs he stray by the river now!
For the Neck is playing his harp by the ford;
He calleth and claimeth a guest for his board,
In his cavern under the mere.

When the mirk was creeping from east to west,
And the daylight fleeing before —
When the daylight hung on the edge of the west
Like the sands on a wide sea-shore;

Then galloping, galloping, up the way
All riderless came the dappled grey,
With quivering limb and staring eye,
With bridle broken and girth awry,
All dabbled with froth and river foam
The terrified steed came galloping home——
But Sir Eric came back no more.



Conclusion.

“ But now can no man see no elvès mo.”

THE Fairies have departed from the earth ; they have returned to their own green land.

They have returned to their ever-bright land—that Avalon, that Island of the Blest, encompassed by emerald seas and fanned by breezes softer than the scented gales of Araby ; where the sun that knows no setting shines upon ever blooming flowers, and ever verdant trees that bear at once the gifts of Spring, and Summer, and Autumn— bud and blossom and golden fruit—on their unfading boughs ; where storm and rain and unkindly frost come not, and Winter is unknown ; where skies of cloudless blue bend unchangingly above river and mere and stream that flow over sands of amber and pearl and gold ; where all is beauty, and calm, and peace. That land whither the good King Arthur was conveyed

by an Elfin Princess after the fatal battle of Camlan :—

“ I am going a long way
 With these thou see'st—if indeed I go —
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
 To the island-valley of Avillion ;
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies
 Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
 And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.”

That land whither the redoubtable champion of ancient Denmark, Ogier le Danois, was carried by Morgue la Faye, who had loved him from his birth ; and where he tarried for two hundred years that seemed to him but as twenty, so great were its joys and delights :—

“ Such joyous pastime did the Feyes make him that there is no creature in this world who could imagine or think it. So the time passed away from day to day, from week to week, in such sort that a year did not last a month to him.”

That land whither Thomas of Ercildoune was conducted by the Fairy Queen, and where he abode for the space of seven years which seemed but as seven days—

That land whither Robin Goodfellow, son of the Fairy King, was conveyed after his probationary sojourn among men. While yet a child, and during sleep, he had been brought to the earth ; on awaking

he found himself alone upon the open wold, and beside him a scroll, on which was written in letters of gold,

“ Love them that honest be,
And help them in necessitie.”

and he instantly comprehended his mission. It was “ to encourage the good, to comfort the forlorn, to punish the wicked, and to thwart and subdue the overbearing.” How faithfully he fulfilled it may be known from the fact that at no distant time he was recalled with honour to his father’s court, never again to be witness of strife or selfishness, anger or hate, suffering or wrong, sorrow or fear.

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